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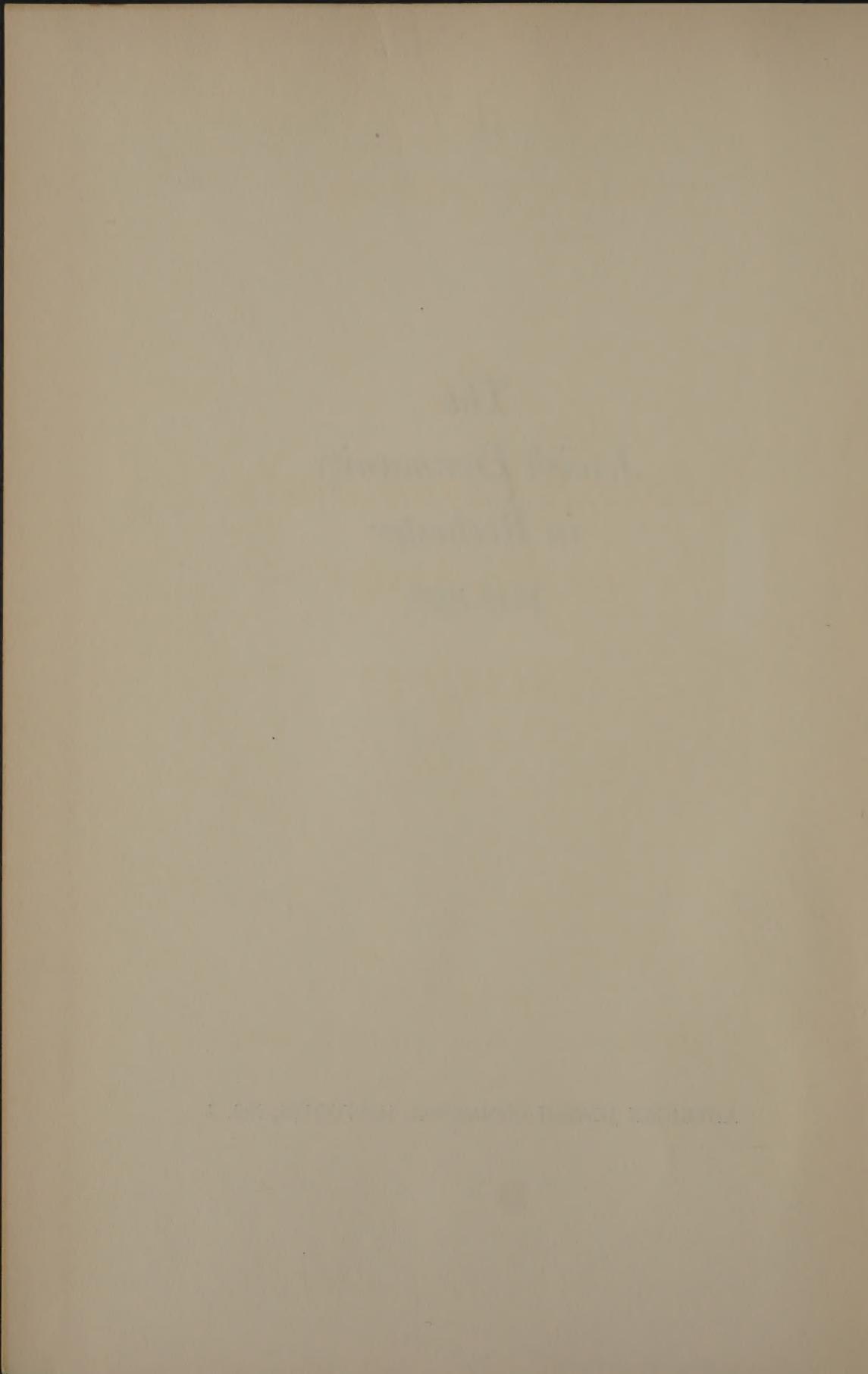
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STUART E. ROSENBERG

*The
Jewish Community
in Rochester*

1843-1925

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NEW YORK 1954

THE AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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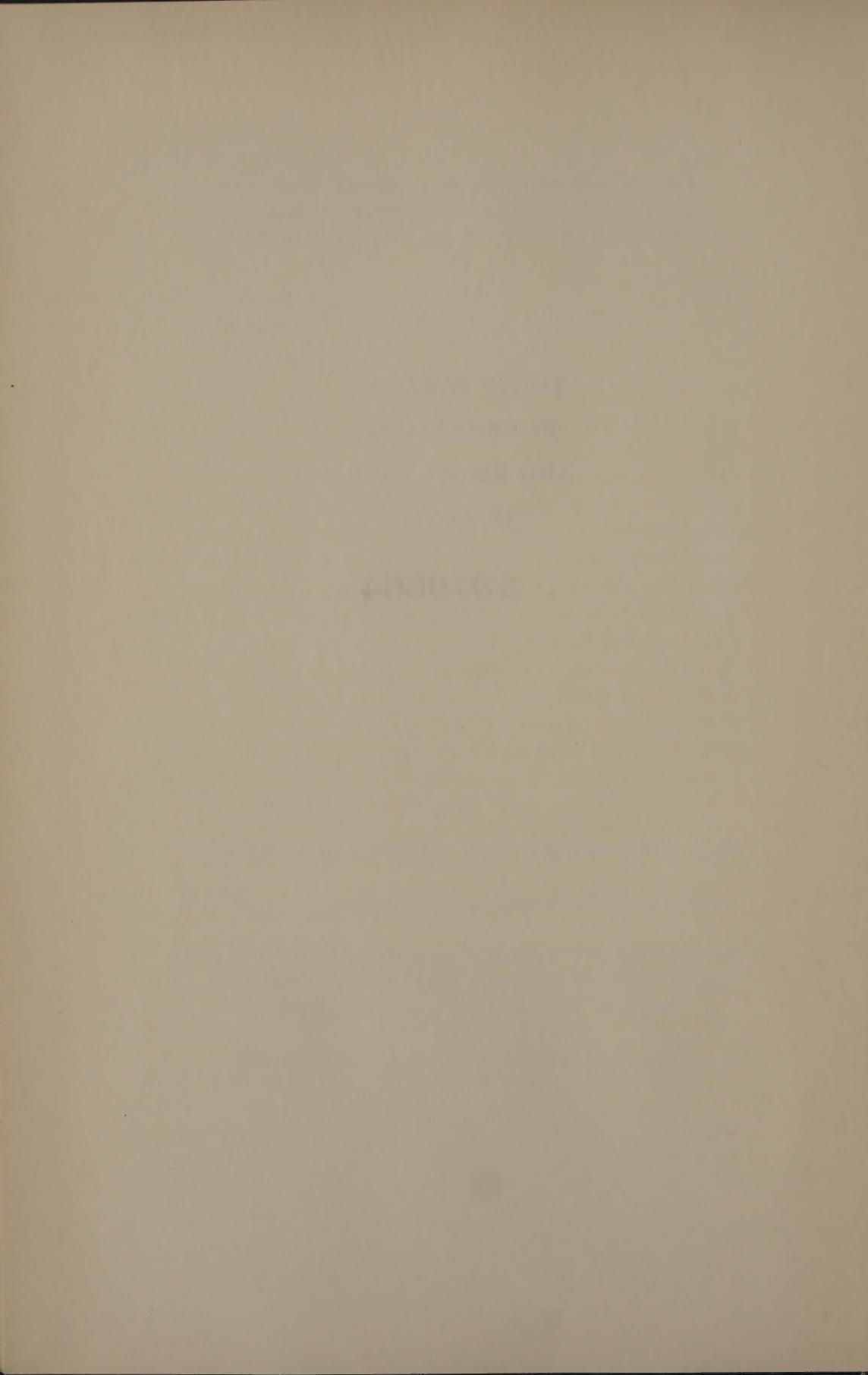
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TO MY PARENTS
IN GRATITUDE
AND TO MY WIFE
IN LOVE

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FOREWORD

MOST of the historically significant developments in American Jewry have taken place on a communal plane. Sharing with Americans of other faiths in the general economic, social, political, and cultural evolution of the country, the Jews of the United States succeeded in maintaining, even enriching, their religious and cultural heritage by building up their traditional communal institutions in constant adjustment to the American environment and by creating ever new communal forms in response to the new needs and challenges. It is doubly regrettable, therefore, that so little is known about the historical evolution of most American Jewish communities.

Dr. Rosenberg's study of Rochester Jewry helps to fill a significant lacuna. In his epic description of the first three quarters of a century of that community, unfolds the saga of successive waves of immigrants who settled on these shores; their speedy adjustment and, before long, significant contributions to the economic life of their city; and the constant interplay of the "old" and the "new" in their life and outlook. We learn here, for the first time with adequate documentation, about the role the Jews played in the economic transformation of the city of Rochester from an industrial city relying almost exclusively on flour mills to a large center of diversified production, particularly also in the clothing industry. The internal strains and stresses, too, and the way they were overcome are graphically narrated here in a way that sheds significant light on the general evolution of the American Jewish community in the decades before and after 1900. It is to be hoped that this book will stimulate other writers to make similar contributions to local and general history.

*New York
January 5, 1954*

SALO W. BARON

PREFACE

TO WRITE A HISTORY of an American Jewish community is a challenging undertaking. It is even more thrilling to one who has the privilege of ministering to that community.

Inevitably, however, the historian becomes more than a mere chronicler of events. He must measure his findings within the broader context of American and Jewish history. Despite his most arduous attempts at objective recording and analysis, his labors are bound to be judged by readers who themselves lived through certain events and who because of their proximity to what is now history, may not share some of his conclusions. Nevertheless, the work here presented represents an attempt at an authentic description of the rise and development of a community in the fuller light of American and Jewish life. If, perchance, some of the material recorded contributes to the building of a sounder and more robust Jewish life in America and to a broader understanding of American democracy, then, despite obvious shortcomings, the major purposes of the book will have been achieved.

No one can be more aware of the complete interdependence of men than the scholar who undertakes the writing of history. This book could never have appeared without the interest, understanding, and help of many people in various parts of the country.

To Dr. Salo W. Baron, my friend and guide, I owe more than mere words can express. He saw the original manuscript through from its very beginning to its acceptance by the Faculty of Political Science at Columbia University as an approved Ph.D. dissertation. Dr. Harry J. Carman, Dean Emeritus of Columbia College, a faculty cosponsor with Dr. Baron, made many helpful suggestions.

I had the encouragement of the Jewish Community Council of Rochester from the inception of my work. To its Executive Direc-

tor, Elmer Louis, and its President, Arthur M. Lowenthal, I owe a special debt of gratitude for their unflagging interest. Royalties from the sale of this book have been assigned by the author to the Jewish Community Council of Rochester in the hope that further research may be encouraged.

I am grateful to the Library of the University of Rochester and especially to its Director of Local History, Miss Margaret Butterfield; similarly to the Rochester Public Library, and particularly, Miss Emma Swift, head of its Local History Division. Dr. Blake McKelvey, City Historian of Rochester, was most helpful, too. I received friendly assistance from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the American Jewish Archives of the Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library, the Columbia University Library, and the Yiddish Scientific Institute in New York.

I am grateful to Dr. Richard M. Brickner of New York city, for making available the only extant copies of a remarkable mine of information, the *Jewish Tidings*.

Miss Elizabeth Adams and Henry Wiggins of the Columbia University Press were most helpful, and for their thoughtful assistance I am most grateful.

I must also record my gratitude to the many men and women who gave me friendly access to records and minutes of Jewish organizations as well as to their family papers and letters.

To Hymen and Sabina Cohen and Mrs. Alfred Hart, dear friends, for their personal interest in the progress of the book, I express my sincere thanks.

I am grateful to a group of friends who voluntarily acted as a Sponsoring Committee in arranging for the publication of this volume. They are: Fred Forman, Harry Germanow, Hyman Kolko, Morris Levinson, Arthur M. Lowenthal, Fred Neisner, Irving S. Norry, Samuel Poze, Benjamin Robfogel, Jack Rubens, Noah P. Sher, and Leon H. Sturman. These men were joined by many others. Regretfully, owing to the lack of space, I can only thank them as a group.

I want to thank my secretaries, Miss Sylvia Kershenbaum and Mrs. Etta Levey, for their cooperation.

Finally, to the men and women who comprise the warm fellow-

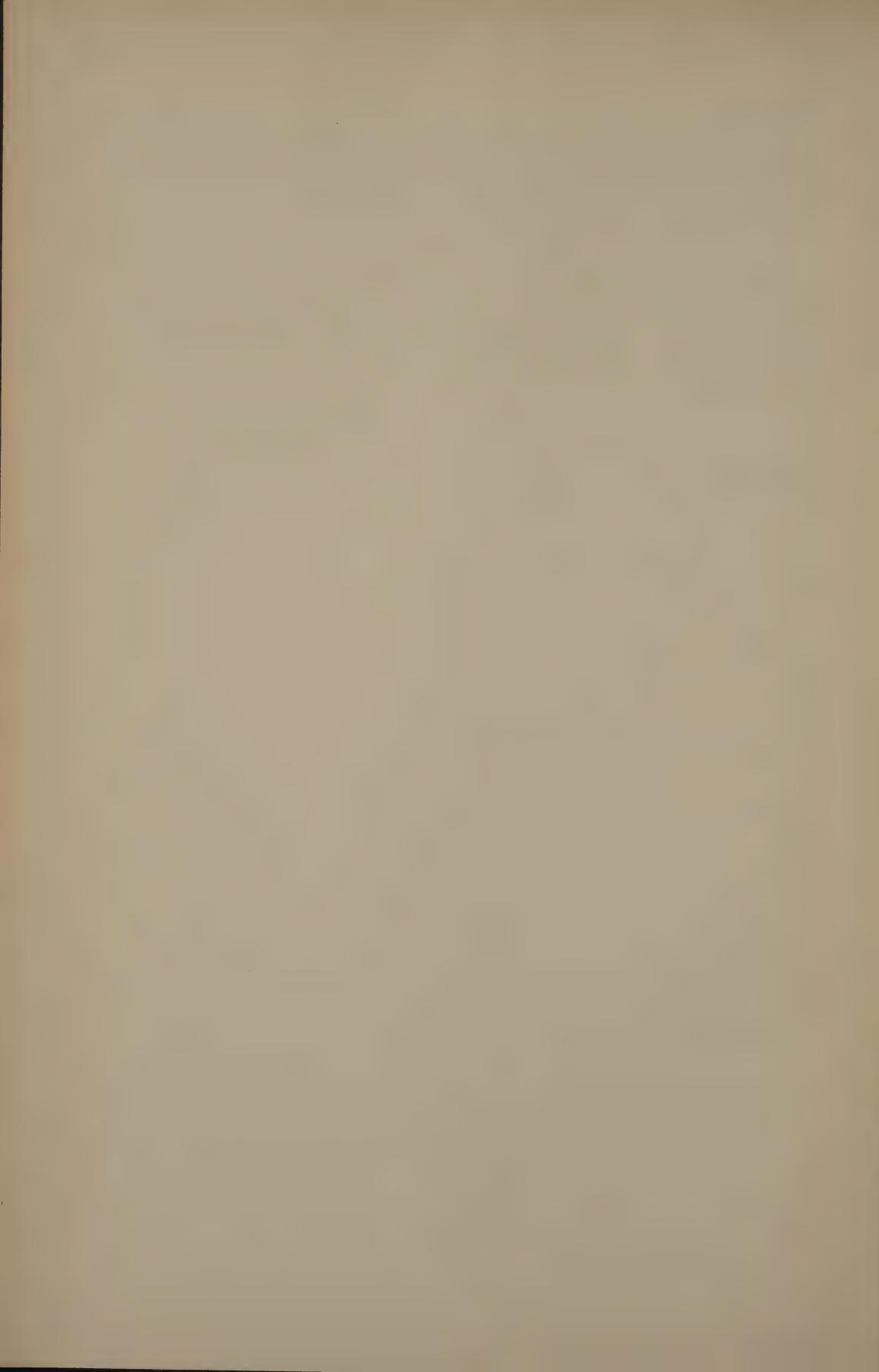
ship of my congregation, Temple Beth El, I express my sincere thanks for their interest in this undertaking and their devotion to the high purposes of Jewish scholarship.

The present volume concludes with the year 1925. In the author's opinion that year marks the close of an era in American Jewish life. But the exciting story of the years that follow deserves to be told. It is the author's hope that a second volume, describing the maturing Jewish community in Rochester, may appear before long.

STUART E. ROSENBERG
Hanukkah, 5714

Rochester, New York

December 2, 1953



CONTENTS

FOREWORD, BY SALO W. BARON	vii
PREFACE	ix

PART ONE *The First Settlers* 1843-1870

1. JEWS COME TO ROCHESTER	3
2. EARLY SOCIAL LIFE	12
3. THE SYNAGOGUE AND ITS BY-PRODUCTS	20
EARLY ATTEMPTS AT REFORM	26
WELFARE AND FRATERNITY	42

PART TWO *The East European Community* 1870-1900

4. THE FIRST JEWS FROM EAST EUROPE	51
5. EARLY RELATIONS: GERMANS AND EAST EUROPEANS	63
6. LIFE AMONG EAST EUROPEANS	70
RELIEF AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS	75
MANNERS, ATTITUDES, AND CUSTOMS	77

PART THREE

*The German-Jewish Community
1870-1900*

7. TOWARD SYSTEMATIC REFORM	85
8. SOCIAL INTEGRATION	105
9. CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS	114
10. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	120
GERMAN JEWS IN THE PROFESSIONS	128
GERMAN JEWS IN POLITICS	130
11. PHILANTHROPY AND FRATERNITY	133
FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS	139
12. EPILOGUE: THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE	141

PART FOUR

*What the Years Wrought
1900-1925*

13. POPULATION CHANGES	147
14. ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENTS	150
15. RELIGIOUS LIFE: ORTHODOX AND CONSERVATIVE	163
16. REFORM RELIGIOUS LIFE	189
17. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE: 1900-1925	197
18. PHILANTHROPY AND WELFARE	210
19. THE RISE AND GROWTH OF ZIONISM	226
20. TOWARD MATURITY	238

CONTENTS

xv

NOTES	245
APPENDIX	297
GLOSSARY	299
SOURCES	301
MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL	301
TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS	301
PUBLIC RECORDS	302
OTHER SOURCES	302
JEWISH NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS	308
OTHER NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS	308
PERSONAL STATEMENTS	309
INDEX	313

1990-1991
Year

PART ONE

The First Settlers

1843–1870

1

JEWS COME TO ROCHESTER

"TOMORROW NIGHT," wrote the editor of a Rochester newspaper, "the annual campaign of the United Jewish Welfare Fund will be started in the J.Y.M. & W.A."

He noted that

. . . The goal this year is \$1,085,000 which is Rochester's share of the world wide philanthropic activities of the Jewish people.

Each year we marvel at the zeal with which the Jewish people assess their worldwide need and go about accepting their obligations. A week ago when a hurry call came for money in anticipation of drive pledges, members of the community were able to get the money from banks to answer the call.

Their traditional response to charitable needs was so well known that they could borrow money on it—which is as solid a rating as one can get.

Year after year these same people are among the most liberal in gifts to our own Community Chest. None has been more liberal with his time and organizing skills in the Community Chest drives than those most zealous for the UJW fund.

Out of unbounded admiration for their sustained personal sacrifices for all humanitarian causes we commend the UJW FUND to all, Jewish and non-Jewish.¹

A few generations earlier, in 1825, Major Mordecai Manuel Noah, the well-known Jewish statesman and journalist, passed through the village of Rochester.² He was on his way to Grand Island to found "Ararat, a City of Refuge for the Jews." After this trip through upper New York state he reported that he had taken "a peek at the West" and found it most eligible for commercial enterprise.³

Noah's hope for a City of Jews failed. His dream of a refuge remained a fantasy, because there were no Jews in the area. Only one relic of that enterprise remains—the foundation stone of his proposed city.⁴

For all of his flights of fancy, Noah could little have dreamed that within a few score years after his journey to the Niagara River, a thriving community would develop in nearby Rochester, which while not a "city of Jews" would become a haven and a home for many of them.

This came to pass in a gradual, uncontrived way. It came to pass because Major Noah's other prediction proved correct. Because, as he had said, the region was "eligible" for business activity, it attracted wandering, uprooted young people in search of success. A century and a quarter after his journey through the section, the Jewish descendants of early settlers formed a stable and secure community. They were rooted. They had "a solid rating"—not only financially but also in good will and in good citizenship. They enjoyed good relations between themselves and their neighbors. They were far from needing Noah's "Ararat." In a sense, they had found it in Rochester. And now, in turn, they could help make possible the establishment of a modern Ararat for persecuted brethren overseas.

The history of the Jews of Rochester is a study in American history. In the development of this community are reflected the moods and the doubts, the ruggedness and the flexibility, the strengths and the failures of American democracy. The essential pragmatism of the American way of life is nowhere better reflected than in the changing patterns of adjustment and accommodation which Rochester's Jewish community evolved over the years in answer to specific needs.

Here, too, one views the American "melting pot" at close range. America served to harmonize differences between the foreign cultures which were transported to this land by its many immigrant groups. For Jews, however, America played an additional role. It acted as a leavener, within their own group, for the wide variety of cultural and religious experiences and expressions which they brought with them from their Old World homes. For the first time

German Jews, Polish Jews, English Jews, Russian Jews, and Rumanian Jews were to live together in a single community.

Rochester Jewish history sheds light on the growth of America because it reveals the acculturation of an ethnic-religious community, its integration into American life and its contribution to the community. But it does more. It is also a study of Jewish communal history, of the resolution of inner conflicts, the slow triumph of the common cause over European sectionalism, and the gradual but perceptible drive toward the establishment of an authentic and indigenous American Jewish Community.

Myer Greentree has been called the father of the Rochester Jewish community.⁵ Others may have come to Rochester before him. He, however, remained to settle and establish himself in business. Born in Hesse-Hamburg in 1818, he is said to have arrived in America in 1840. While there is some doubt regarding the exact date of his arrival in Rochester, it is fairly certain that he had come by 1843.⁶ Before coming to Rochester, like so many other young men who were migrating from Germany to America, he had been a peddler. He plied his way through New England for some time and continued his "trade" in Rochester after coming there. Early in 1844 he was married to a non-Jewess, Elizabeth Baker, of the nearby town of Greece.⁷ Greentree had been working in the dry-goods store of Sigmund Rosenberg, another of the very first Jews to settle in Rochester. Rosenberg, too, had taken a native American girl as his wife.⁸

After his marriage, Greentree took charge of the shop for manufacturing children's clothing which his wife had been running on Front Street. This was to become Rochester's first large-scale clothing company after 1848, when Greentree was joined by three other newcomers, Joseph and Gabriel Wile and Hirsh Britenstool.⁹ This firm, Greentree and Wile, is recognized as the parent of Rochester's men's clothing industry.

Greentree, Rosenberg, and Jacob and Joseph Altman are the only Jews known to have been living in Rochester in 1844.¹⁰ But it was soon apparent that the tiny Jewish colony would grow. The next year, two young married men arrived in Rochester—Myer

Rothschild and Morris Seligman came with their wives, some time in 1845.¹¹ Rothschild continued his peddling, while Seligman was able to establish himself as a clothing merchant on Bridge Street.¹² In the following months a number of unmarried men came. Some, like Asher Beir, Isaac Ganz, and Elias Wolff found positions as clerks in one of the small stores.

As the months went by, it became increasingly clear that Rochester would no longer be completely by-passed by Jewish men traveling toward the West from New York and New England. By 1850 there were almost sixty Jews living in Rochester.¹³ Many were peddlers upon arrival, but after several years they became clerks, grocers, jewelers or, more frequently, clothing merchants. Almost all of these men were young, in their late twenties or thirties, and unmarried. There were only a dozen married couples, but in the five years after 1845 (when the first Jewish child was born in Rochester), over twenty-five other children were born in their parents' newly adopted city.¹⁴ Apparently, these Jews meant to make Rochester their permanent home. The majority, both the Germans and the few Englishmen, had left the Old World for good. They would soon become full-fledged Americans.

Of the new Jewish settlers who came to Rochester from other parts of the country, a few were in a position to begin their economic career by operating small retail stores. The majority, however, were without any capital and they soon took up peddling over the Genesee area. This meant that they were away from the city most of the week, and returned, if possible, for the week end at home. Peddling was a very laborious task. It meant going to small rural districts; it involved language problems; it entailed long, continuous hours of work.¹⁵

But these were young men with great hopes and boundless energy. In this "frontier" country all were working hard, looking for success.¹⁶ Their labors availed them, for by 1850, at least half of Rochester's Jews were identified with local clothing manufacture. After a few years of peddling many were able to set up businesses of their own. In their small stores lining the Main Street bridge, they cut the suits into sizes and shapes; sewing was done in the rear of the stores. The business and output of these enterprising men quickly began to expand. By 1850, the value of the city's cloth-

ing production may even have reached the staggering sum of \$500,000.¹⁷

To achieve this large output meant that many members of the family, sisters and brothers, had to be hard at work cutting or sewing most of the day.

The pattern of economic adjustment was beginning to be established by 1850. If you had been living in New England, New York city, or even the deep South, you came to Rochester as part of the "westward" migration wave. If you had saved some money from your earlier peddling in New York or New England, you tried to establish some kind of retail store in the center of the city. Perhaps you were a relative of someone who had come to Rochester a year or two before and who had written you to come to join him. You came and joined the work, in the store, or remained at home sewing suits. If you came to Rochester almost directly from Germany or England, you would have to try your hand at peddling for a year or two in the hope that you might soon be able to establish your own enterprise.

There were some Jews, who, like other recent arrivals, could not find their place quickly or easily. These were days when you did not stay in one place very long, bemoaning your bad fate. For this was a fluid, mobile society. Jews who could not easily make the grade in Rochester left after a few weeks or months for the new, attractive centers in Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, and other Mid-western states.

Nor was economic adjustment the only cause for moving on. There were obviously some who were restless, unhappy with American life, tired of the peddler's pack, or homesick for Germany.¹⁸ In many cases the same appealing reasons which brought them to Rochester, caused them to pick up their few possessions, after a short stay, to try their fortunes elsewhere.

Yet a great number remained. There were obvious signs of increasing stability in the community. In 1855 there were 8,557 families in Rochester fairly adequately housed in 7,408 dwellings. Community services were being developed and welfare institutions were already being built. The proud boast was already heard that there was "no city in the country (perhaps in the world) where so many citizens own their own homes as in Rochester."¹⁹

But Rochester was hit hard in 1855, anticipating the great panic by two years. That year saw many crop failures along the Genesee and as a result there was severe local retrenchment.²⁰ Many were thrown out of work, and new arrivals could not find employment. House rents were rising sharply, fuel costs were also going up, and wages seemed most inadequate to meet these problems.²¹ The 2,000 men and women reportedly employed by the clothing industry in 1856 were not among the highest paid workers in the city—their average annual wage was undoubtedly much below \$300 a year.²²

Public relief was inadequate to meet the situation and several new private charities were organized that year. The Jews, as much affected by the depression as were other Rochesterians, had been in the process of organizing their own private welfare association, and the Hebrew Benevolent Society came into being very soon in response to the serious economic situation.

The economic unrest was the cause of a series of strikes not only in Rochester but across the country. In 1853 local agitation reached a peak when a large number of strikes were called in an attempt to force lagging wages to catch up with soaring prices. In most cases raises were given without striking and when strikes were called they usually failed. While strikes were successful elsewhere, most Rochester stoppages failed.²³

Until this time the clothing industry was virtually unaffected by the labor agitation. Its labor force consisted mostly of seamstresses who worked in their own homes and had little to do with unions. Moreover, many clothing workers were unsophisticated recent arrivals who were principally concerned with finding some work quickly. But times were getting so difficult that the seamstresses could not fail to be influenced by the general unrest among working people. In April, 1853, the seamstresses gathered to complain of their inadequate daily wage of 50 cents. Public opinion soon won them a voluntary raise of 25 cents, without recourse to a strike. The wounds were healed somewhat, but the women formed a clothing workers' union a month later. Very soon thereafter, the men organized Rochester's first tailor's association.²⁴

One year earlier an unusual development had taken place. The journeymen tailors had banded together in an attempt to manufacture the clothing themselves and thus keep the profit which

would have accrued to the manufacturers. Apparently they were encouraged in their undertaking by similar enterprises being attempted in other parts of the state. A local newspaper wished them well, adding that if the association was well managed it "can hardly fail to prove successful."²⁵ We hear nothing more of this daring enterprise and we must assume that it did not succeed.

In addition to the problem of a dissatisfied labor force, the local economy in the late fifties was suffering from the difficulties resulting from insufficient and costly credit. Local investment capital was being diverted, in many instances, to Western projects. We know of several Jews who were among those investing money in Pennsylvania oil lands.²⁶ The panic of 1857 caused a further curtailment of credit and added to Rochester's commercial difficulties. An inadequate supply of coal prevented the fuller industrial development. The Erie Canal, responsible for Rochester's earlier growth and expansion, was now faced with serious competition as railroads began to invade the field of heavy freight. Rochester was now confronted by the threat of serious economic decline.

It is at this crucial turning point in Rochester's economic history that serious attention must be paid to the commercial activities of the local Jewish group. If Rochester were now to survive the crisis some industry had to be developed which did not require large new investment, and which could circumvent the problems created by the lack of coal, and by the Genesee's irregular fall of water. The community, slave to the force of habit, looked to the millers for leadership. Despite the existence of some twenty local mills, it was becoming clear, however, that the millers were losing their earlier predominance in the city as well as in the nation. The millers were still the most substantial group in the city, but their greatest achievements were in the past.

The city began to turn from the millers to the nurserymen. By this time, within a ten-mile radius of the center of town, nearly 2,000 acres were owned or leased by nurserymen. From these men it was now hoped would come Rochester's salvation. The city took on a new name—the Flour City became the Flower City.²⁷

Actually it was the clothing industry which infused vitality into the economic scene and almost singlehandedly saved the situation. From this time on it was to be a major factor in the Rochester econ-

omy. It not only helped solve the immediate problem, but decades later, when large immigration waves hit the shores of America, it participated in the expansion of Rochester's economy. But the clothing industry was so decentralized, so scattered among shops and homes, and so largely manned by recent immigrants that it received scant notice at the time. It remained for a local historian to appraise, in retrospect, the significance of the clothing industry to Rochester's economy:

Forty years ago, when it was feared by our citizens that, from one cause or another, the milling interest might not keep pace with the same industry in other parts of the country, thus retarding the growth and prosperity of the city, it was hoped that our excellent water power would attract other kinds of business, and make up for what might be lost in connection with the manufacture of flour, which first gave Rochester its early and rapid growth. This hope to a considerable extent has been realized. Still it is plain to be seen that Rochester no longer is dependent upon water power to insure its future prosperity. The sewing machine is already doing more than the water power can do hereafter. The important industry of clothing manufacture is one of the most extensive and important in our city. More than twenty firms composed of thorough business men, and with ample capital, are giving work to thousands of operatives, thus indicating most plainly its vast importance to our city.²⁸

The Civil War brought strength to several local industries. The clothing industry gained greatly during the war years. Army orders increased its activity and output. In 1860 it was reported that no less than 1,550 clothing workers made up the largest industrial group in Rochester.²⁹ Their product, worth \$1,183,403, was already more than double the estimated production value of ten years before. By 1870, capital investment in the clothing industry had increased another \$100,000, in part because of the recent introduction of sewing machines. The leading clothing firms were moving over to Mill Street, making it the center of the industry. The forty-two clothing manufacturers listed in 1860 began to consolidate and form new partnerships. The leading firms, such as Greentree and Wile; Michaels, Levi and Company; Bretenstool and Son; Hays and Brothers; Schwarz Brothers; and Rosenthal and Stettheimer, were headed by those who had been among the first Jewish settlers in Rochester.

In the meantime not only had the Jews of Rochester contributed to the economic stability of their city, but they were themselves becoming an affluent group. Years were to elapse, however, before the business community realized it. By the time it did awaken to their importance, the Jewish clothing manufacturers had become an even more significant group.

2

EARLY SOCIAL LIFE

WITHIN a decade after their arrival, Jews in Rochester were beginning to adjust easily to their environment. Their numbers had not increased heavily, but there were signs of a steady and stable population growth. By 1854, they boasted approximately fifty families.¹ Yet despite their small numbers they appeared as an identifiable segment of the total community. They were proud of the continued advance of their inner group life. Most of all, they rejoiced that in this new land they were finding their place as a respected community, "while we were a byword and a mockery in most of those places whence we came."²

Apparently, there were no obstacles in the path of acceptance into the mainstream of local activities. While they maintained with vigor their own group identity, they joined non-Jewish immigrants in fraternal activities. Nathan Neuhaffer, active in Jewish religious affairs, led the Humboldt Lodge of the Odd Fellows.³ He had been elected, some time before 1853, to serve as the "Noble Grand" of that lodge.⁴ Morris Seligman, probably the first Mason of Jewish faith to be raised in Rochester, joined Valley Lodge #109 in 1848.⁵ These Jews were moving in the same circles as other German immigrants and they found friendship in groups where they could speak the mother tongue.⁶ While some English-born Jews had arrived in Rochester in the fifties, the large preponderance were still of German origin.⁷

Jews were quick to learn the ways of American political life. In 1856, the Republican Party was launched nationally with John C. Frémont as its candidate. Abram Stern, who had arrived in Rochester in 1850, was an active worker in behalf of Frémont. He was

said to be one of the first active Republicans in the country.⁸ Neuhafer apparently was also active in politics—he was appointed doorkeeper of the State Assembly at Albany in 1857.⁹ The old Sixth Ward, densely populated with Jews, was for many years represented in the Common Council of the Board of Supervisors and Board of Education by a Jew. Joseph Beir, William Guggenheim, and Abram Stern were aldermen in the years before 1870.¹⁰

Their place in the fraternal and political life of the city indicates the easy manner in which this small group of about 350 people, had become integrated in its new environment.¹¹ The annual dances and entertainments sponsored by the Jewish community at Palmers' Hall always attracted large numbers of non-Jews.¹² Rochester apparently looked with respect upon these recent arrivals who brought their European traditions of gracious living. Newcomers to Rochester marveled at "the remarkable taste . . . exhibited in the architecture and adornment of their homes and gardens." The Jews were admired, too, because "they also adorn the walls of their parlors with good paintings and load the tables with the most select books."¹³ Ten years later a Rochester judge complimented the local Jews for being "upright, honest and honorable in every respect as we are." In obvious jest, he said, "The fault I find with them is only that they are much like the Yankees." He then added the significant remark, "I have been four years on the bench and have had during that time only four cases concerning Jews and these Jews were strangers."¹⁴

The process of social acceptance continued as the crucial war years approached. The war solidified the Jewish position in the community. It not only helped strengthen their social position, it also buttressed their economic structure. As has been said, the war particularly boosted the clothing industry. Rochester Jewish clothiers specialized in ready-made clothing and these "hand-me-downs," as this clothing was called, gained wider acceptance as a result of the new customs. Many soldiers wore "factory-made" clothing for the first time. While Rochester's overall economy by 1860 showed discouraging signs of decline, the clothing companies owned by Jews were making steady advances.¹⁵ A most interesting listing of incomes in a local paper during the Civil War period indicates the extent to which local Jewish clothing merchants had

strengthened their economic position during these years. The following men are listed, together with their 1863 incomes and taxes:¹⁶

	<i>Income</i>	<i>Tax</i>
Gabriel Wile	\$ 2,687	\$ 109.35
Julius Wile	2,035	70.75
Elias Wolf	4,300	185.00
Meyer Greentree	3,100	125.00
Morris Seligman	6,104	275.00
H. Bretenstool	1,578	43.90
E. S. Ettenheimer	1,485	14.75
Henry Michaels	1,455	42.75
Sigmund Stettheimer	39,651	1,982.00

A number of them apparently were faring well enough to build new homes. Meyer Greentree's new \$15,000 mansion attracted public attention in a newspaper notice.¹⁷

But side by side with this new-found economic success there was a growing discontent on the part of the factory workingmen. While praising one Jewish clothing man, Sigmund Stettheimer, for granting a wage increase, a vocal citizen wrote the editor of a local paper that "poverty is the nursery of ignorance and vice" and pleaded that other employers follow suit. Her letter was greeted with silence on all sides.¹⁸

If the individual business man failed to raise the worker's living standard, he salved his conscience by supporting organized charity. The Hebrew Benevolent Society was a useful instrument. During the Civil War days, the Society undertook a program of activity which aroused a good deal of favorable comment in the city. The editor of a local newspaper called their proposed plan "the prompting of the patriotic spirit." The Society announced that it would set aside a sum of money for sick soldiers and their families. While such money was made available for any and all soldiers, preference was to be given to Rochester soldiers.¹⁹

The Jews of Rochester could not supply many men to serve in the Union Army. The greatest part of their adult male population was, by this time, between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. They had come to Rochester as young men in the preceding fifteen years. Their children, on the other hand, were still too young to serve.²⁰ There is scarcely any written evidence of Rochester's Jewish

servicemen, although a Joseph Levy of Lyons, New York, is known to have lost his life.²¹

Arndt Rosenthal was probably the only local Jew to serve as a commissioned officer. Scattered sources tell a part of his Civil War activity. At the Annual Charity Ball of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, Rosenthal was the guest of honor. His commission as second lieutenant in the New York "National Guard" had just come from Albany. A large assemblage overcrowded the hall. Many dignitaries had come to pay their respects to Arndt Rosenthal. Brigadier General Williams, who had organized the Dragoons in 1850, was present in uniform.²² To the delight of those assembled he administered the oath of office to Lieutenant Rosenthal and handed him his commission. Dr. Kalisch, visiting rabbi at Berith Kodesh congregation, offered greetings. In the name of the Jewish community Rosenthal was presented with a sabre, sash, and belt. Moses Hays and William Guggenheim did the honors. Judge Chumacero, representing the general community, spoke favorably about the place of the Jews in community life.²³

In July, 1864, the entire 54th Regiment, including Rosenthal's "Company L," was mustered into federal service for one hundred days. They served at a prisoner of war camp in Elmira.²⁴ Rosenthal was made a recruiting officer and returned home for two weeks to set up a Rochester office. He spent part of his time checking delinquent soldiers. As he was about to return, his work received favorable public notice. The local press indicated that he "has performed his duties well and made them his sole thought since he has been here. He has been prompt in his duty but has endeavored to make [sic] the call as easy as he could for the men who are called from business to serve the government."²⁵ Some weeks later an illness which Rosenthal contracted at Elmira was made known by a local newspaper. The paper wished him well because "our citizens can't afford to have such a man ill."²⁶

In November, the 54th Regiment was mustered out of federal service. Rosenthal remained with this outfit which now served as a home guard. In 1865 he was made first lieutenant and in 1869 he became a major.²⁷

Unfortunately, we know nothing more about Rochester Jewish participation in the army of the Union. Rosenthal, in any case, was

received with honor and earned the respect of the local community. His coreligionists were justly proud of him. They had dedicated their Annual Ball to him and there he enjoyed the good wishes of leading local dignitaries.

While only a small number of Rochester Jews could qualify for the army, they did other things to help the war effort. They were active in home-front volunteer enterprises, "contributing freely of means and men to the cause."²⁸

Throughout the country, Jews were divided over the question of Jewish group participation in the war effort. Leading Jews differed. Some agreed with a New York journal in feeling that the Jews should participate as "*citizens* whose sympathies are with the brave men who are fearlessly doing their duty in the dark hour of peril."²⁹ Others felt that it was better for Jews to band together as Jews even in such civic enterprises, using this overt patriotic activity as a means of counteracting the various accusations that were made against them.³⁰

In neighboring Syracuse, Jews had taken the bold step of arranging for a Jewish enclave within the Union Army. During the week of August 24, 1862, a campaign for recruits was held. A recruiting office for Jewish volunteers was open during the day, and at night patriotic meetings were conducted in the synagogue itself. The rabbi of the congregation himself helped stimulate interest in volunteering. He was of the opinion that such a demonstration of Jewish patriotism would not only serve the cause of the Union, but would show the Know-Nothing party and their followers that Jews were not un-American aliens. At the end of the week, enough men had been recruited to organize the first company of this new regiment. More than \$2,500 had been subscribed to the relief fund.³¹

Rochester Jews, however, were not impressed with this plan of action; they preferred to look upon themselves as citizens rather than as a community apart. The local press was quick to note this approach and to comment favorably upon it. The *Union and Advertiser* had heard that the Jews of Syracuse had "raised a fund of \$2500 and nineteen volunteers in one night." Rochester Jews, they noted, were patriotic and concerned with community needs, but "they act with other citizens rather than by themselves."³²

Some time later, the Jewish community of Rochester had an-

other occasion to express its position on this question. Sigmund Stettheimer, then Rochester's wealthiest Jew and president of the congregation, objected very strongly to a request from Mrs. W. Barron Williams, president of the Ladies' Hospital Association. She suggested that the women of the congregation take part in the war relief bazaar as a group. In a letter to Mrs. Williams, Stettheimer expressed his strong feeling against segregating Jews as a group in what was, he felt, a civic and patriotic undertaking. Jews are Americans, he wrote, and the "only national character in which they wish to appear would be under the Star Spangled Banner, the glorious flag of the Union—the banner of civil and religious liberty." However, he added, they would be happy to assist in an individual capacity, like other citizens. Apparently not wishing to arouse suspicion of a financial default, he enclosed a check for \$400 in the name of the Jewish women of Rochester. It is quite possible that he himself underwrote the contribution. He hoped, he said, that the contribution would "help to relieve the sufferings of our wounded patriotic soldiers, and soon return them to their brave comrades in the field, to give the final blow to that criminal attempt to destroy this Union, in the maintenance of which none are more interested than our Jewish fellow-citizens."³³

Stettheimer's letter is extremely revealing. Rochester's Jews were just reaching the point of integration into American life and they were, apparently, very self-conscious about their new position. They were zealous about guarding it. Throughout, there is a repeated emphasis upon Jews as *citizens*, of their having none other than American nationality.

Despite Stettheimer's strong defense of nonsegregation of the women, there was organized on March 6, 1870, by thirty Jewish women of the congregation, the Jewish Ladies' Aid Hospital Society. The purpose of this group was to aid in the work of the local hospital. In the years that followed, it also sent contributions to other communities stricken by calamities.³⁴ In spite of Stettheimer's protestations the group was probably founded to keep pace with the growing number of sectarian welfare societies and institutions that began to appear in the early 1870s.³⁵

This approach to community activity on the part of the Jews sheds light on their intergroup relations. They shunned the ap-

proach taken by the Syracuse Jewish community despite the fact that they lived in the same area and undoubtedly had heard of the programs planned in the "Salt City." Their attitude was probably looked upon with favor, evoking, as it did, the applause of the press. We shall have occasion to note how Rochester Jews continued to follow this approach in later years. From the Civil War period on, the pattern was thus established: in matters of civic interest "they act with other citizens rather than by themselves."

The war went forward; patriotic fervor was sweeping Rochester. Almost every night in August, 1862, a patriotic rally was held in Franklin Square. The Square was at the fringe of the Jewish neighborhood, the Sixth Ward. Each night hundreds of people attended these meetings. Fervent speeches were made and patriotic songs were sung. Then the crowd would wait expectantly to see who would come forward to enlist. Many of those who were too old to join the army would enliven the atmosphere by stepping up to offer a bounty "for a good man to represent me in the army." The bounties usually amounted to twenty-five dollars. Joseph Beir was appointed to head the committee in Franklin Square which collected the bounty money and saw to its proper disbursement. Jewish clothing merchants were in the vanguard of the bounty offerers. One night four Jewish men were responsible for the enlistment of sixteen men, having offered bounties for each.³⁶

The Civil War years had come and gone and Rochester's Jews were now firmly entrenched in the community. While some were moving westward, the majority felt at home in Rochester. They were entering civic life, assuming their share of responsibilities, and gaining the admiration of their non-Jewish friends. Characteristically, there still remained an area, aside from religious worship, which could not be fully shared with all of their neighbors—the social world. An Independent Literary Union was formed by young Jewish men and women in 1866.³⁷ They presented plays to large public audiences, often attracting the elite of the city. The balls of the Hebrew Benevolent Society were always successful social events. Yet the Jews still found it necessary to organize a social club of their own.³⁸

Sometime before 1868, the first Jewish social club was founded;

among the organizers were Louis Lowenthal, Henry Michaels, Joseph Wile, Julius Wile, and William Guggenheim. It was called the Harmony Club and at first its members met over a store on West Main Street. The idea of having a place where members of the Jewish community might meet for recreation and social enjoyment received favorable and enthusiastic response, for soon the meeting place was too small and so, in April, 1868, rooms were obtained in the Sibley block on "new Main Street."³⁹

The social and economic position of the Jews in 1870 was a far cry from their plight two decades earlier. In twenty short years they had succeeded in becoming Rochester's fourth largest ethnic group, leaders in its industrial, political, and civic life. The war years had consolidated their position and they looked confidently to the future.

3

*THE SYNAGOGUE AND ITS
BY-PRODUCTS*

OCTOBER, 1948, saw the celebration in Rochester of the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Congregation Berith Kodesh, the city's lone Reform group and its oldest Jewish congregation.¹ The commemoration set the members of the community to reminiscing. Many began to speculate about its origin and development.² Those with long memories were certain that Berith Kodesh had actually been an Orthodox congregation and they credited Dr. Max Landsberg with setting its course away from the Orthodox. In Rochester, the story goes, Jews held to the traditional, their synagogue was Orthodox until Dr. Landsberg came from Germany, in 1871, with the new doctrine of Reform. Like other accepted legends this conclusion suffers from oversimplification and fails to take into account the many crosscurrents which have run through Jewish life as it has developed in America and elsewhere.

We have already seen how the Civil War served as the turning point in the life of Rochester's Jews. It changed their economic and social position; it influenced their attitudes toward themselves and the world in which they lived. It was also responsible for some changes in their religious attitudes.

But to understand the development of these religious patterns we must go back to the beginning of the Rochester Jewish settlement.

Two characteristic acts symbolize the emergence of Jewish religious life in any new environment: the organization of a congregation and the establishment of a Jewish burial ground. There is no

standard order of precedence regarding these two acts; it varies from community to community. Most often, even where evidence is lacking, we can assume that the purchase of a Jewish cemetery will first be suggested at a gathering for religious worship. While written evidence indicates that the first symbolically religious act in Rochester was the purchase of a Jewish burial plot, we may assume that informal religious worship preceded this.

Our first record of a Jewish communal undertaking is the purchase on April 3, 1848, of a plot of land in Mt. Hope Cemetery by "Joseph Altman, Joseph Weil and R. Rothschild, Jews."³ They purchased 1,760 square feet, sufficient for approximately 70 graves, at a cost of \$80. For several years thereafter this section of Mt. Hope Cemetery was referred to by city authorities as "Jew Ground."⁴

It seems possible that the thought for the purchase of a cemetery stemmed from informal religious meetings that could have been conducted in various Jewish residences. Our sources go back only to the first New Year service held on October 7, 1848. The home of Henry Levi, at the corner of Clinton Street and Bowery Place (now Cumberland Street) was the scene of these devotions. Apparently encouraged by their success on the New Year, twelve men met on the day following the Day of Atonement to organize an official religious society.⁵ Some sources indicate that they then chose the name "Berith Kodesh." It is most likely, however, that the group remained officially nameless.⁶ Six months later they moved to rented quarters in the third story over 2 Front Street. Once called Stanwix Hall, this had been a room for social purposes.⁷ The congregation, lacking an official name, now came to be called the Front Street Synagogue.⁸ There is some evidence to indicate the possibility that it was referred to as Congregation B'nai B'rith.⁹ Joseph Steefel, recommended by Dr. Morris Raphall of New York, was the first Cantor, ritual slaughterer, and Collector. He is supposed to have received an annual salary of \$150.¹⁰

A half dozen newcomers settled in Rochester early in 1849, and more of their relatives were on their way. Self-confidence was growing. The congregation's moving to Front Street was more than a physical act; the move symbolized the sense of being rooted which the early settlers were beginning to feel.¹¹

Rabbi Mordecai Tuska had recently come to New York from

Hungary. He was recommended to the Rochester community as one who could serve a variety of functions: rabbi, reader, ritual slaughterer, and circumciser. They elected him unanimously.¹² Rabbi Tuska came to Rochester in April, 1849, with his wife Rebecca and their son, Simon, and took up residence on North Street. Rabbis were a rarity outside of the larger seaboard cities of the East. Small wonder, then, that for some time Tuska was referred to by non-Jews as the "Priest of the Jews Synagogue."¹³ American Jews, themselves, were not too familiar with rabbis on this continent. They were not yet accustomed to them as leaders of congregations.¹⁴ For the most part the *hazzan* was the "Reverend." Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, in 1846, was offered a position in Albany, New York, as "preacher and teacher," but not as rabbi. But Wise, following the liberal German tradition, stood by the principle that the preacher and teacher of a community is its rabbi.¹⁵ He would accept only if elected rabbi as well as preacher and teacher. It is entirely possible that Wise's precedent helped influence Rochester's Jews to bring Tuska as a replacement for their *hazzan*, Joseph Steefel.

Writing later in his *Reminiscences*, Wise reveals the attitudes of the time:

There was antipathy at that time (1846) in America to rabbis and preachers in general just as there was a prejudice against cultured people of any kind, because they were looked upon as unpractical and helpless. The peddler's pack was too heavy for them, work too hard and their learning profited naught. There was no room in the synagogue for preachers and rabbis. The *chazan* was the Reverend. He was all that was wanted. The congregations desired nothing further. The *chazan* was reader, cantor, and blessed everybody for *chai pasch*, which amounted to 4½ cents. He was teacher, butcher, circumciser, blower, grave digger, secretary. He wrote the amulets with names of all the angels and demons on them for women in confinement, read *shiur* for the departed sinners, and played cards or dominoes with the living; in short, he was a *Kol-bo*, an encyclopedia, accepted bread, turnips, cabbage, potatoes as a gift and peddled in case his salary was not sufficient. He was *sui generis*, half-priest, half beggar, half oracle, half fool as the occasion demanded. The congregations were satisfied, and there was no room for preacher or rabbi. Among all the *chazzanim* whom I learned to know, there was not one who had a common-school education or possessed any Hebrew learning.¹⁶

Wise was succeeding in Albany and it is possible that his success as rabbi influenced the Rochester congregation to emulate the Albany community. Yet the persistence of habit is a strong influence. Tuska was to be rabbi, but he was still a Jack-of-all-trades! Rochester Jews, it seemed, had not as yet discarded the attitudes formed in the first days of congregational life, when Joseph Steefel acted as *hazzan*. Tuska served as the first rabbi of the congregation, with functions similar to those of Wise in Albany. Yet by many he was still referred to and thought of as "our Hazzan."¹⁷

Tuska conducted his congregation along traditional lines. The congregation "entertained the most friendly feelings toward" him, for he "led his flock with the Bible and the Talmud as his guide."¹⁸ He was a popular circumciser or *mohel* and "when performing the rite of circumcision, which he always did gratuitously, he exerted himself particularly to take up collections in behalf of the distressed in Palestine."¹⁹

His interest in the poor of Palestine was early aroused when Aaron Selig, one of the first Palestinian messengers to come to Rochester, arrived in February, 1850.²⁰ He had not long before visited Wise in Albany. Wise had promised but had not produced aid. He had offered Selig a long and flourishing statement. When Selig arrived in Rochester, Tuska wrote out a verbatim repetition of Wise's endorsement, except for the concluding Hebrew phrase.²¹ Apparently conditions in Rochester greatly resembled those in Albany. Moreover, Tuska was undoubtedly influenced by Wise, whose reputation was growing widely.

Tuska's most admired accomplishment was his encouragement of cordial relations with non-Jews. Many distinguished Christians were beginning to visit the synagogue. Almost every Sabbath and Festival strangers came to the services. An editorial in a local newspaper indicates a general interest in the "peculiarities" of the Jewish religion.²² In a way, Tuska was only indirectly responsible for these first "interfaith" activities in Rochester. It was his son, Simon, who had opened the door.

Rochester Jews were justifiably proud of the fact that Simon Tuska, after only two years in America, had won a scholarship to the newly founded University of Rochester.²³ In the summer of 1851, after a very exacting examination by the Board of Education,

only three of fourteen scholarship applicants were admitted. Young Tuska was one of them.²⁴ At the University he did well scholastically and gained the friendship of many educated Christians. He had the respect of students and professors. His fortunate status reflected well on all his coreligionists and they proudly enjoyed the good will thus established.²⁵ At the request of many non-Jewish friends who felt a deep interest in the ritual of Judaism, Simon Tuska published, in 1854, a little volume entitled *The Stranger in the Synagogue*. The Reverend Henry W. Lee, rector of St. Luke's Church, wrote a foreword recommending the book, and added, "I take pleasure in saying that I regard it as being worthy of publication and an extensive circulation among both Jews and Christians."²⁶ The book, the first to be published by a student of the University, was printed locally by Darrow and Brothers and greeted upon publication by the Rochester press.²⁷

All of this had its effect upon the status of Rochester Jews. They could now write of themselves that "we are in this country respected and honored as a nation, and can enjoy all the privileges of American liberty."²⁸ Simon Tuska, largely responsible for the esteem achieved by Rochester Jews, was soon to sail for Europe. He left, in 1856, to become one of the few American students, if not the only one, at Dr. Frankel's Jewish Theological Seminary at Breslau.²⁹ He later returned to America as an ordained rabbi.

By this time the congregation showed still other signs of stability and security. In 1854, after six years of formal organization, they finally incorporated under the laws of the state of New York.³⁰ Their numbers continued to increase. There were, by this time, somewhere between 150 and 250 Jews in Rochester.³¹ While some were moving westward, following the German immigrant stream, the majority remained in Rochester. They were looking ahead to a satisfying life in their adopted community. The economic success already won by a few helped strengthen communal life. As the sources of support increased, enthusiasm and zeal colored congregational activities.

In the fall of 1855 new officers were to be elected. Meyer Rothschild had served as the first president, in 1848. In 1854, upon incorporation of the congregation, he was succeeded by Elias Wolff as president and Nathan Neuhaffer as vice-president. The congre-

gational election of 1855 was held in a feverish and excited atmosphere. The group's vitality is attested to in the following account:

All came prepared with tickets of different colors—red and green (Whigs and Democrats?) with the names of the candidates respectively written upon the different tickets. Weeks before the meeting, one could have thought that a State governor and staff was to be elected, such was the ambition manifested by the different parties up to the hour of meeting.³²

Despite this, 66 votes unanimously cast for Elias Ettenheimer placed him at the helm of the congregation. Girded by this support, the worshipers began to seek larger quarters, which they urgently needed.³³

Jews were settling in a new neighborhood, east of the city's center. The leaders of the congregation learned that the Tabernacle Baptist Church on North St. Paul Street was not being used by its members. In 1855 the Jewish group sought to purchase the church for use as a synagogue. The Baptists, however, were unwilling to sell, but agreed to rent the quarters for a year, beginning in September. The fall holidays were approaching and something had to be done quickly.³⁴ Berith Kodesh leaders accepted. It was not long, however, before a storm of opposition broke out. Several vocal members raised a series of objections. While Jewish law generally permits the transforming of a church into a synagogue, the idea of Jews praying in such a building may have been unfamiliar to these people and therefore repugnant to them.³⁵ Moreover, the new quarters did not provide for the separation of the sexes on two floors.³⁶ This group of dissenters opposed the seating of men and women on the same floor with but an aisle dividing them into two sections.³⁷

Desiring to restore harmony and to heal the breach, the leaders began another search for new quarters. Apparently this was no easy task. In the middle of December, while the group was still using the Church temporarily, the jubilant announcement was made: the congregation would build its own house of worship! They acquired a fine lot, 135 feet square, at the corner of Atwater and Chatham streets. They were able to pay the sum of \$2,000 for the site and were preparing to build, in the spring, an edifice that would cost \$10,000.³⁸ The financial challenge did not frighten them. Their

treasury boasted \$5,000 in ready money and they knew that they could depend upon the continued support of their members to make up the difference.³⁹

Some months later it was discovered that the lot at Atwater and Chatham streets had title claims against it. The case was taken to court.⁴⁰ In the interim, two things occurred to change the plans of the congregation. The Baptists were now ready to sell their church. When this was made known, the synagogue leadership, anxious to make a permanent decision before the High Holidays, overrode the conservative minority which had opposed the use of the church.⁴¹ In August the Tabernacle Baptist Church was purchased for the sum of \$6,750.⁴² Here Berith Kodesh remained for nearly forty years.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

The history of early American Judaism testifies to the fact that as congregations moved from one building to another their moves were accompanied by innovations in congregational life.⁴³ Rochester proved no exception. The year 1856, when the Baptist church was acquired, saw several immediate changes in the congregational religious program.

Tuska left that year for reasons which are unknown to us. Rabbi Isaac Mayer came in the fall to replace him. The need for an expanded congregational program was apparent by this time. The increased number of families, together with their young children, could not be cared for in the earlier, simpler system. In Tuska's days, Jewish education was provided through home instruction. At different times, a Mr. Lowenstein and an English Jew, a Mr. Barnard, assisted the rabbi in teaching the young children at their homes.⁴⁴

With the acquisition of the new property it was now possible for Rabbi Mayer to meet the educational needs of the growing Jewish population and a daily school was opened. Rabbi Mayer taught Bible and Hebrew, while a Mr. Thomas was employed as English teacher, instructing in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and grammar.⁴⁵ Seventy pupils started their studies at the new school. Sessions were held in the basement of the synagogue,⁴⁶ but before

long the classes were moved to a schoolhouse at Andrews Street, near North Clinton Street.⁴⁷

The congregation took seriously the matter of education. By 1857 they had established a separate Board of Education known as the *Chevra Talmud Torah*. Elias Ettenheimer, previously president of the congregation, then became head of the Board of Education. The Board had virtual autonomy in the conduct of its own affairs, being governed by its own officers. Yet all of the men on the Board were also active in the management of the congregation. This was a private school⁴⁸ and only members' children were permitted to attend.⁴⁹ In addition to Hebrew and English subjects, German was also taught. Hebrew was indispensable for religious worship and English was obviously important since the school had to offer a program similar to that of the public school. German was taught because parents still retained close ties with their homeland and among many families German was the only tongue spoken in the intimacy of the home.⁵⁰

This was still the period in American life when private schools, parochial schools, and academies were serving a large proportion of those children receiving formal education. In Rochester, private schools and academies were attended by almost one quarter of the children in the elementary school group and a larger number of those in the advanced group. Parochial schools, too, were expanding under the direction of some of Rochester's fifty churches. Yet, all together, Rochester schools did not provide for more than two thirds of the children of school age.⁵¹

In spite of the efforts of the congregation to develop an adequate school system, a dangerous practice had already set in. Rabbi Mayer used the pulpit to denounce those parents who sent their children to Catholic parochial schools, entrusting their children to the care of the nuns.⁵² He warned them of the danger of these institutions. These and other considerations apparently prompted the congregation, in 1859, to change the complexion of the school. From then on, the leaders said, the school was to become a general one, "enabling the poor as well as the rich to educate their children."⁵³ We know of at least one large bequest left to the congregation for the education of poor children.⁵⁴ This step, it was hoped, would en-

courage all Jewish parents in Rochester to send their children to the Jewish school.

Little is heard about the school again until 1861 when it was reorganized and moved to Butts' Block, on the corner of Main and Stone streets. It was renamed the Hebrew, German and English Institute. In the difficulties which faced the congregation in 1860, the numbers dwindled to forty pupils. Ettenheimer continued as president of the reorganized school and engaged John Vosburgh as teacher of English. A Mr. S. Bing answered the advertisement carried in the *Jewish Messenger* and was elected as teacher of German and Hebrew, probably at a yearly salary of \$700.⁵⁵

These two men did not spare the rod, yet they successfully continued teaching until about 1867.⁵⁶ By this time the twin impact of two related movements caused the final dissolution of the Institute. The public school movement was becoming more and more entrenched in Rochester, as elsewhere. The success of the public school brought about the need for introducing a new form of Jewish religious education.⁵⁷ The Sabbath School program seemed to be the only answer. In 1869, after a two-year lapse, two young men of the congregation, Sol and Isaac Wile, founded a Sabbath School. About one hundred children and teenagers quickly enrolled. Volunteer teachers were recruited from the members of the congregation.⁵⁸

Another concern of the congregation was the establishment of a ritual bath. We have no evidence concerning the existence of a community ritual bath or *Mikvah* prior to 1856. It is likely that arrangements for this ritual observance were at first a private rather than a group concern. But in 1856, the Baptists helped the situation! They had left their water apparatus untouched and upon the instigations of Rabbi Mayer and a subsequent vote of the members this was easily fitted up into a *Mikvah*.⁵⁹

It is probable that Rabbi Mayer continued to perform the functions of community *shohet*. We have no record of any other qualified ritual slaughterer at this time. Apparently, by this time, the congregation had also developed a plan whereby Jews in the adjoining small towns could be regularly supplied with Kosher meat.⁶⁰

Despite these advances in traditional practices, there was increased desire to discard what were called "time-worn, antiquated

ceremonies." What the tradition minded called "silly reform notions" looked like a rationalistic approach which spelled progress for some of the others. Some years later a criticism by one of the group's own members tells something of the inner thinking of the time:

As Jews prosper they are apt to be mislead [*sic*] into extreme notions of reform on account of their inattention to or their indifferent ideas about religion and partly on account of the infinite trust they have placed in their leaders.⁶¹

But in 1856, at the first High Holiday Service after the church was acquired, the congregation decided otherwise. "Many prayers were deleted, others altered and the service (was) gone through in a manner more suited to the age than it has ever been here before." The officers of the congregation felt they had reason to congratulate themselves.⁶²

The next year saw still another major innovation. The first Confirmation Service ever held in Rochester was conducted on the Festival of Weeks (*Shavuot*) by Rabbi Mayer. The sight of the five boys and two girls on the pulpit brought tears to the eyes of many of those present. They consciously felt that they were traveling along a new religious path. They were proud, too, that like themselves "every congregation not hyper-orthodox has probably held a confirmation this year."⁶³ The following day, Rabbi Mayer took the opportunity to advocate from the pulpit still another revision of attitude. This time he was not recommending a ritual change; he was asking for the uprooting of a folk pattern associated with ritual. He attacked the custom of "beating Haman" on Purim. He deplored, as well, the practice of throwing nuts at one another at the service of the Rejoicing of the Law. It is apparent that while there was still no program offered for a systematic ritual reform, Mayer was saying things the group wanted to hear. They were anxious to "cleanse" the ritual of some of the folk customs which, in their opinion, were "not suited to the age."⁶⁴

It is about this time that a split occurred in the Rochester Jewish community. Very little is known about this schism; no community record mentions it.⁶⁵ We do know, however, that on September 19, 1858, Adas Jeshurun, "a religious society in which divine worship

is celebrated according to the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish church," was incorporated under the laws of the state of New York. The society had been meeting for some time before at No. 28 Lancaster Street, apparently in rented quarters.⁶⁶ Little is known about this group; one can only suggest possible reasons for its organization. Seven different names appear on the certificate of incorporation. Jacob M. Smit and Abraham Cohen signed the document; Isaac S. Samuel, Jacob M. Smit, Jacob Meyer, Aaron L. Park, James Cohen, and Moses H. Smit appear as trustees. The names suggest several possible clues. We know that Isaac S. Samuel was an English Jew who came to Rochester before 1850.⁶⁷ James Cohen, another trustee, married Josephine Michaels, sister of Henry Michaels, another early English settler.⁶⁸ Aaron L. Park was in the habit of sending letters to the *Jewish Messenger*, labeling himself as "One of the Pious Five." In these letters he reproached the leadership of Berith Kodesh congregation for introducing reforms and denounced those who have "little Judaic religious impulse." Park, writing as "one of the pious five," may be referring to the little group which had banded together as the nucleus of the Adas Jeshurun society in protest over the reforms of the parent congregation. It is possible, too, that the seceding group consisted not only of traditionalists, but also of some English-born Jews who preferred to worship separately from the German-dominated Berith Kodesh congregation.

While we cannot be certain about the character of this new congregation, its program or its life span, we do know that here was an open protest against the ritual innovations that were beginning to appear. After only a decade of activities, the Berith Kodesh congregation had moved far enough away from its original ritual outlook to cause a secession. But neither group was following a consciously contrived plan. The American Jewish community was still without national religious movements or centralized rabbinical leadership. Each community was left to its own devices. The small Adas Jeshurun group lacked a strong following and it probably did not last more than a year.⁶⁹

When Rabbi Mayer left in 1859, to go to Hartford, Connecticut, the congregation elected a rabbi, Dr. Ferdinand Sarner, who did not align himself with the reformers.⁷⁰ We suppose that he was

aware of the divided opinion in the congregation and chose not to alienate anyone. Apparently at first he bent over backwards to impress the tradition-minded segment.⁷¹ With the coming of this new rabbi, we assume that "the pious five" and their followers came back to the fold.

The congregation prided itself on its choice. Dr. Sarner, they announced, had a "bona-fide Doctor diploma rather scarce amongst so many counterfeits in this country." It was said that he had studied at the Royal Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin and had received the coveted Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Hesse. In January, 1859, he set sail for America. Dr. S. M. Isaacs, editor of the traditional *Jewish Messenger* in New York, had recommended Dr. Sarner to the Berith Kodesh congregation. In Rochester he was immediately acclaimed. He was considered an excellent orator and lovable lecturer. While the congregation recognized his imperfect English, they pointed to his linguistic abilities. He knew, they claimed, Spanish, Latin, Greek, French, and German, and would soon do well in English, too. On September 4, 1859, they unanimously resolved to elect him.⁷²

New strength and an increased sense of stability were now felt. Less than a week after Sarner's election the congregation ventured forth on a new undertaking. For the first time they could afford to engage an additional official and they sought someone to serve as a ritual slaughterer and circumciser; a salary of \$500 a year was offered. They were also anxious to bring about another innovation in the service—they wanted to organize a regular choir.⁷³ The introduction of a choir would probably lead to other reforms. In 1847 Isaac Mayer Wise had introduced a choir in Albany and he claimed that the choir brought about the excision of some traditional Hebrew prayers at the service. "Poor as the choir was, it still was the immediate cause of getting rid of all the medieval rubbish at once," he wrote.⁷⁴ The Rochester congregation was no doubt aware of the consequences of its new step. A cantor was elected two months later. Reverend Elkan J. Herzman, who came from the Clinton Street Synagogue in New York, did not stay very long, however. After a few months he left for another position in Cleveland, Ohio.⁷⁵

The congregational unity which greeted Sarner's arrival was

short-lived. The elements in the situation made real unity an impossibility, for the congregation was basically divided and any deviation to the right or the left on the part of the rabbi would soon upset any balance. The bitter storm then raging in American-Jewish life between the so-called Orthodox and Reform camps had its echo in Rochester. When elected, Sarner professed to be independent of either group; he was not a "party man." Very soon, however, when he omitted three prayers at a Sabbath service, he began to displease the traditional group.⁷⁶

As weeks went by Sarner continued to alter the ritual. There is little doubt that the conservatives, who were in the minority, began to make things difficult for him. Word of dissension began to spread. Reverend Isaacs, editor of the *Jewish Messenger*, wrote in New York, "When my protege (Dr. Sarner) mounts the pulpit a number of members leave the synagogue."⁷⁷ Nothing Sarner could now do would appease the traditionalists.

In February, 1860, Sarner conducted what was called "the most solemn service in the history of the congregation." Only a few times before had conversions to Judaism taken place in Rochester. Five years earlier, mention had been made of three Protestant women who embraced Judaism and were married to local Jewish merchants.⁷⁸ Now Sarner was asked to convert a Protestant woman who had already been married to a Jewish man. He arranged a public conversion service, a confession of faith. Jews and non-Jews flocked to the synagogue and overflowed the room. The congregation was visibly pleased. "The effect produced upon the audience was such as will be remembered."⁷⁹

Yet the effect was fleeting indeed. When Sarner began his pulpit lectures it was "a signal for a very large number of the oldest members to leave the synagogue . . . order and decorum are no longer to be remarked in their place of worship."⁸⁰ The more liberal members could not hold back the flood tide of protest coming from the right-wingers. The traditionalists were provoked further by the thought that they had been betrayed. They had expected Sarner to heal the breach by siding with them. They had apparently given up their separate society in the hope that Berith Kodesh could again become a more congenial religious environment. Aaron Park, in one of his communications to the national Jewish press, sug-

gests that Rabbi Mayer had at least "commanded respect" but Dr. Sarner "has little religious impulse."⁸¹

A petition was circulated by the traditionalists to annul Sarner's contract. He was offered a bonus of \$175 if he would withdraw his agreement with the congregation. This he refused to do, preferring to wait until summer.⁸² When summer came, Sarner was ready to leave. On July 22, the Board of Trustees met to act on Sarner's "resignation." They then adopted two resolutions, one in behalf of the congregation, the other for the trustees.⁸³ Dr. Sarner was presented with two copies of the resolutions, one in English and one in German.

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The resolutions are an obvious attempt to dignify an uncomfortable situation already widely publicized. Yet they appear to be something more. Their description of Sarner, as "an eloquent lecturer and a good truly religious man" appears to be included by design. It may be taken as an attempt on the part of the congregation's Reform leadership to counter the charges that had been repeatedly leveled against Sarner by the Orthodox opposition.

We leave Rochester for a moment to follow Sarner, who was to become the only Jewish regimental chaplain in the Civil War.

Little is known of Sarner's activities between 1860 and 1863. In 1861 he applied for the position of rabbi of the Anshi Chesed Congregation of New York city. The Board of Trustees acknowledged the application but did nothing about it.⁸⁴ He may have already got the idea of enlisting as a chaplain, for a reporter for the *American Israelite* writes that he met him in the Capitol Building in Washington in the middle of 1861.⁸⁵ Sarner, in any case, was elected to the chaplaincy of the 54th New York Volunteer Regiment on April 10, 1863, when the officers of that regiment met and certified his election.⁸⁶ We read, with some amazement, the endorsement they gave his election.

We the undersigned Chaplains, after a careful examination of the Rev. Dr. Sarner's certificates and papers, do respectfully certify that he is a graduate of two of the German Universities, a regularly ordained minister of the Lutheran Church, and we therefore cordially recommend him to the office of Chaplain in the 54 Regt. of N.Y. Vols. in which regiment he has received an appointment.⁸⁷

Since we are certain that he was a rabbi previous to and subsequent to his service in the army, we know that he did not leave the Jewish fold. His designation by the chaplains as "a regularly ordained minister of the Lutheran Church" is undoubtedly an error.⁸⁸

Sarner served for a year and a half and was wounded at Gettysburg. He was discharged on October 3, 1864, for physical disability,⁸⁹ but he apparently left camp before the order had been transmitted to him. This made him technically absent without leave. In March, 1869, the order for his honorable discharge on account of disability was revoked and he was listed as discharged for being absent without leave.⁹⁰ Upon discharge, Sarner delivered several guest sermons in the pulpits of New York city congregations. He was engaged in some publishing ventures, and in 1872, returned to congregational life. He was elected rabbi of the Orthodox Beth-El Congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, and remained there until his death in August, 1878. He fell victim to an epidemic of yellow fever.⁹¹

By an interesting coincidence Simon Tuska returned to Rochester in March, 1860, fresh from his European studies. He had qualified himself as rabbi. The congregation, proud of young Tuska and divided over Sarner, invited the newly ordained rabbi to preach a guest sermon in English.⁹² But since Sarner was not yet willing to leave, Tuska had little chance of becoming Rochester's rabbi. Tuska then accepted the rabbinical post at the Reform congregation in Memphis, Tennessee.⁹³ He remained in Memphis until his untimely death in 1871. Ironically, a few months later, Sarner arrived in Memphis to become rabbi of the Orthodox congregation!⁹⁴

The acquisition of the church in 1856 was the first signal for liberalizing the ritual. Now in 1860, a vacated pulpit offered the congregation its second opportunity for enlarging the program of reform. The leading laymen had been strong advocates of ritual change. Sarner simply got caught in the middle of two divided camps. Despite their ardent desire to emulate Temple Emanuel in New York, the leaders were still very careful not to introduce any reform which would lead to disunion.⁹⁵ Now, without a rabbi, the

lay leaders themselves might attempt to introduce the desired changes.

The first step in their calculated moves toward reform was their invitation to Dr. Isaac M. Wise to lecture in the summer of 1860. Dr. Wise delivered a talk on "The Mission of Israel."⁹⁶ He obviously used the occasion to expound his doctrines of reform. He was always a strong advocate of the need for introducing modern music in the synagogue. As previously noted, he was the first to introduce the mixed choir in Albany, as early as 1847. Berith Kodesh had followed this reform in 1859, when, with Sarner's arrival, they sought a *hazzan* who would organize a choir. Nimrod Rosenfield, an active member and an able musician, determined to carry out a battle in behalf of an organ. Wise's influence proved beneficial in the struggle. Soon after the Cincinnati leader's sojourn in Rochester, Rosenfield succeeded in his endeavors; an organ and a mixed choir were introduced. We are not certain whether Gentiles were already singing in the choir, although we know that by 1865, such was the case.⁹⁷

The lay leadership was now taking matters into its own hands. Lacking a rabbi, they also lacked a systematic approach to the reforms initiated. Yet from the frequent accounts in the *American Israelite*, *The Occident*, and the *Jewish Messenger*, they could readily learn about the developments taking place in other congregations in the country. They continued to make revisions in the service, and with each revision felt that they were making steady and continued progress. In 1861, they described their condition in the following words:

The Congregation B'rith Kodesh has moved steadily in the road of progress and reform. We have a good choir and if the Rev. Dr. Wise would come to our city again he would find out how different our service is conducted, since the summer of 1860 when we had the pleasure to listen to two eloquent sermons of the Rev. Doctor; what our Congregation wants now is a good spiritual leader, a rabbi able to command the respect and confidence of the members and we have no doubt that in a few years the Rochester congregation will be second to none in the United States.⁹⁸

Despite the glowing self-tribute all was not well in the congregation; there were signs that the congregation was vegetating in the

absence of a rabbi. Abraham Schmidt, who came after Herzman left in 1860, was then serving as Cantor or *hazzan*.⁹⁹ But the community had changed since the early days of Tuska. *Hazzan* Schmidt was not looked upon as the spiritual leader, nor was he known as the rabbi of the congregation. Schmidt's duties were confined to the synagogue; he did not serve as *mohel* or *shohet*, and he had no relationship to the school. Under these circumstances few vital activities could be conducted. The school, recently reorganized, lacked strong leadership. Ritual slaughtering was performed by an unofficial *shohet*, probably by one of the more learned laymen. There was no *mohel*. Dr. L. Elsner, a Syracuse physician, was called to Rochester about once a week to perform some circumcisions.¹⁰⁰ Occasionally, a Reverend Levy Rosenblatt, of Elmira, would travel from his city to officiate at a circumcision.¹⁰¹

Who was to blame for the lack of a rabbi and for the general inertia? Apparently the leadership was faced with a dilemma. It did not want to engage a rabbi of avowed radical reform tendency, for fear that the minority of traditionalists would be displeased. On the other hand it was unwilling to offer the pulpit to someone who would be too traditional in his views.

One bright interlude took place in the late fall of 1860. Henry M. Seligman, the first boy known to have been born in Rochester, celebrated his Bar Mitzvah, reputedly the first such event to take place in Rochester. On November 10, on the Sabbath following his Hebrew birthday, the nineteenth of Heshvan, young Seligman read the prophetic portion in the synagogue of Berith Kodesh. For the occasion he had delivered an address "with much feeling and earnestness." The speech, no doubt, had been written by a teacher. The boy began his talk with these words:

Almighty Father! Thou who art ever ready to listen to the prayers of the *young* as well as the old suffer me now to come before Thee in child-like simplicity and reverence. The solemn hour has arrived, when I am to leave the frolicsome pastimes and enjoyments of childhood and enter into religious communion with the responsible sons of Israel. The day has come when it behoves [*sic*] me to take upon myself the solemn responsibilities resting upon every member of the synagogue. . . .

The ceremony apparently was most auspicious and dramatic. The first fruit of the new land had been brought to the altar! The proud

parents entertained a large circle of friends "and the event was altogether celebrated in a happy manner."¹⁰²

Nevertheless, within the congregation, a period of stagnation set in. This was a period of lay supremacy. In the name of unity the members did not proceed to engage a spiritual leader. Yet, the active laymen continued to impress a Reform stamp on the congregation. After the High Holidays of 1862, a major change in ritual practice took place. The congregation had invited Dr. Kalisch to occupy the pulpit during the holidays. He was successful in molding the opinion of the congregation so that they accepted Wise's prayer book, the *Minhag Amerika*, for Sabbath use. It was Dr. Kalisch who headed the Committee at a Cleveland Conference in 1855 to help unite the *Minhag Amerika*.¹⁰³ By this time, many of the congregations in the southern and western sections of the country were beginning to accept the revised ritual of Isaac Wise.¹⁰⁴ But in the eastern part of the country, excluding New York city, there were few, if any, which had clearly aligned themselves with Wise's position. In October, 1862, a congregational correspondent jubilantly informed the *American Israelite* that the *Minhag Amerika* was unanimously adopted.¹⁰⁵ Apparently the minority was not present when the vote was held.

Now that this issue had been settled and the direction of the congregation was clearly established, Moses Hays, president of the congregation, began to agitate the question of securing a rabbi. It was the desire of the group to find someone who would follow *Minhag Amerika* and would consolidate the gains made by the Reform leadership. In response to an advertisement an application was soon received from Rabbi Simon Tuska, then serving a Memphis Reform congregation. Tuska, it will be recalled, had lived in Rochester earlier and had graduated from the University of Rochester. He was extremely well liked in Rochester, and was apparently anxious to return to the congregation his father had served a decade before. The Rochester group elected Tuska and was hopefully expectant of entering upon a new era of development. In the interim, it seems, Tuska was reelected by his Memphis congregation and could not accept the Rochester offer. Soon, thereafter, in June, 1863, Rabbi Aaron Guinzberg of Baltimore was elected for five years, at an annual salary of \$1,500. They were satis-

fied with their choice, recognizing that Guinzberg was "no great preacher, but a pleasant lecturer, no radical reformer but a man of progress and reform, accepting *Minhag Amerika*, choir and organ. . . ." ¹⁰⁶

Rabbi Guinzberg made a favorable impression at the High Holidays. New life seemed to enter the congregation. The choir, offering several songs in German, was received enthusiastically. The traditional *Kol Nidre* prayer "was abolished by proclamation and another choice which made more impression" was substituted. Abraham Schmidt read the service. He was assisted by Gabriel Wile, an outstanding layman, who volunteered his services. They still read the traditionally assigned Torah portion, but abolished the practice of *aliyot*—calling men to the reading desk to bless the Torah. The *hazzan* still faced the east, toward the ark, but before long he was to change his position to face the congregation. Not long thereafter the reading of the Torah, too, was changed and abridged.¹⁰⁷

The major opposition had been defeated and absorbed. As the lone synagogue in the city, the congregation was very much like many such groups of the present day. It consisted of three groups—orthodox, moderate, and ultrareformers. In 1863 the congregation was able to resolve some of the internal conflicts that had been raging for almost a decade. It accomplished this by taking a stand in favor of moderate reform and then searching for a rabbi who would fit their mold. While Tuska and Sarner undoubtedly had some influence in the evolution of their platform, powerful laymen such as Moses Hays, Joseph Wile, Elias Ettenheimer, Elias Wolff, Sigmund Stettheimer, and Nimrod Rosenfield played the dominant roles. The influence of Isaac Mayer Wise, both through his *Israelite*, which was widely read in Rochester, and through his 1860 visit, was another large factor in this process of development. The storms of disquietude had settled and Berith Kodesh congregation was now ready to move ahead. Not immodestly they wrote of themselves:

There probably never has been a congregation in the U.S. like this one commencing strictly orthodox and gradually doing away with old customs and ceremonies until at length the veil is lifted, the mist arises and behold we have a reformed congregation which entirely obliterates

and does away with all those foolish customs and brings order and decorum (the first great principles of religion) into the house of God. . . . The congregation has three groups, orthodox, moderate and ultra reform, yet harmony prevails.¹⁰⁸

During the war years Guinzberg had several opportunities to come into contact with the general community. In 1864, he followed President Lincoln's request for special church services on Days of Humiliation and Prayer.¹⁰⁹ On several occasions he wrote articles for the local press expounding Jewish ritual practices and theological beliefs.¹¹⁰ At least once he attracted great public attention when he declared that he saw no need for temperance work since he had not seen one of his members intoxicated in several years.¹¹¹ The activities of the congregation continued to attract the interest of the non-Jews. Not long after President Lincoln's assassination the editor of the Rochester *Union and Advertiser* visited the synagogue. He wrote a glowing editorial under the title "An Hour in the Synagogue."¹¹² His attention was first drawn to the "Holy Ark draped in mourning on account of the national calamity."¹¹³

The editor notes that the heads of gentlemen are covered and they sit on the right of the aisle, while the ladies sit on the left. The rabbi and the reader were seated opposite the entrance while the choir occupied a gallery over the entrance, facing the rabbi. "In other respects," he notes approvingly, "the Synagogue is not unlike a Church." He was interested in the reason for the custom of seating according to sex. He offers an explanation that skirts the issue. This was apparently "suggested" to him by the elders of the congregation. "There would be no objection to family slips but because a satisfactory division of slips cannot be made to please all, the present method is adopted." He reports that the seats are owned by the congregation and members are taxed according to value to meet current expenses. "The salaries paid to Rabbi, Reader and Choir are liberal and the tax upon the congregation is large." He was impressed by the choir and said that it is considered the best in the state. Christians sang in the choir. Mr. Nimrod Rosenfield led the choir and Professor Schulz was the organist. The editor asked: "What would the Rabbis of ages gone by have said had they seen their congregations inspired by sacred songs from

Gentile voices?" He did not answer his rhetorical question, but was obviously pleased with the reforms of the synagogue. He praised the reader, Mr. Abraham Schmidt: "his reading in Hebrew is excellent." He expressed regret that Reverend Dr. Guinzberg "who has the esteem and affection of his congregation did not preach a sermon" that Saturday morning.

Credit for the reforms is given to Mr. Moses Hays, a former president. These reforms, the editor asserted, have contributed to the prosperity of the congregation. Concluding his lengthy description and evaluation, he proclaimed, "We are proud of this congregation as it does honor to our city."¹¹⁴

We have found no evidence of Jewish reaction to this highly laudatory public expression. We may be certain that local Jews were happy to read the editor's comment. Their search for a ritual "suited to the age" undoubtedly was affected by the desire to be seen by their neighbors in a friendly light. The editor had said, "in other respects the Synagogue is not unlike a Church." He referred to the men's head covering and the division of the sexes. The Rochester congregation, before very long, saw to it that these two "curiosities" were also abolished.

In 1867 Isaac M. Wise returned to Rochester, which he called "one of my favorite spots in this part of the globe." Wise liked Rochester and the sentiments were mutual. He stayed at the home of Elias Wolff, an early settler, whose residence was a stopping place for celebrated guests. Dr. Kalisch and Dr. Kuttner had also stopped there. The congregation seemed now to be without conflict. Wise noted that the "congregation consisting of about 80 men is one of the most peaceable and best picked in the country." This time he was pleased with the music he heard in the synagogue. He complimented Mr. Rosenfield, who gave much of his time to the direction of the choir. Wise was asked to preach and as usual was met with glowing response. He asked for only one thing: that the congregation introduce *Minhag Amerika* for the High Holidays.¹¹⁵ This, too, was soon to come. In fact the congregation in a very few years abandoned Wise's moderate Reform ritual and adopted a more radical service, Einhorn's *Olat Tamid*.

Rabbi Guinzberg's five-year contract was not renewed and he left Rochester in the summer of 1868. Again the congregation was

without a rabbi. Abraham Schmidt continued to serve as *hazzan* and headed the congregation in the absence of a rabbi. The progress that had been made was again on the verge of dissipation. A year passed by and nothing had been done to reactivate the congregation. But slowly "Sleepy Hollow," as one letter writer called the congregation, began to move out of its hibernation. The conflict between the opposing factions came out into the open. Now it was no longer a question of Orthodoxy opposed to Reform. Much distance had been traveled since 1860; there was no Orthodox group in 1869. It was a question of moderate versus ultraradical reform.

The elections of officers in 1869, reminds us of the heated elections of 1855. Again parties were organized and platforms offered. The radical party selected its standard bearers and raised its motto.

ROCHESTER WANTS RADICAL REFORM! SLIPS! SCHOOL! RELIGION! EDUCATION!
 [The initials followed the names of the candidates.]

Pres.	Nimrod Rosenfield	Rochester
V.P.	Julius Wile	Wants
Treas.	Henry Rosenberg	Radical
1st Trustee	Israel Rice	Reform
2nd Trustee	Joseph Shatz	Slips
3rd Trustee	A. Sichel	School
4th Trustee	S. Rosenblatt	Religion
Secy.	Henry Epstein	Education ¹¹⁶

The radical group was campaigning for the introduction of *Min-hag Amerika* for the High Holidays in addition to the Sabbath. They wanted the congregation to engage a rabbi of acknowledged ability and Reform principles at the earliest moment. Moreover they wanted to introduce "family slips," or pews.

The radical party was only partly successful in its campaign—they were victorious in three out of the eight offices. Joseph Wile, a moderate reformer at this time, was elected president, but Julius Wile, the radical party man, won the office of vice-president.¹¹⁷

The compromise achieved in the election results would last only until the arrival in Rochester of a rabbi with strong convictions and recognized qualities of leadership. He was yet to come. For the present the congregation was advertising in the Anglo-Jewish press:

Wanted—by Congregation Berith Kodesh, Rochester, N.Y., a gentleman of advanced ideas and reformed religious views to fill the office of Rabbi, Teacher and Reader and who is able to deliver lectures in both the English and German languages.¹¹⁸

WELFARE AND FRATERNITY

Historically the synagogue was the center of organized Jewish communal life. It served a threefold purpose. Not solely a House of Prayer, it functioned also as a House of Meeting and a House of Study. Such a ramification of function strengthens the viewpoint that Jews never lived only as a religious, ecclesiastical community. Rather did they participate in a uniquely shared existence with other Jews in experiences that stemmed from religious separatism but transcended the boundaries of cult and worship. Early in Jewish history the sense of corporate concern, of "all Israelites being responsible for each other" was transformed from concept to folk-way. The European Jewish community of pre-Reform days existed as a corporate, self-contained entity. The synagogue was not a surrogate of the community, it was the stage on which most of its acts were performed. It served as the paramount vehicle through which Jewish corporate life might be expressed. Education, welfare, religion were made into a single experience through the medium of the community synagogue.

But a synagogue of this kind can function only when there is a community of this kind. The early Reform movement in Germany brought about not only ritual but also communal reform. The German Reformers desired to destroy Jewish separateness by destroying the Jewish corporate community. Differences would still remain vital only in the area of religion. And in the area of religion, and, only in religion, the synagogue would be the functioning representative of Judaism.

When the first settlers came to Rochester, as when they came in small numbers elsewhere in the United States, their first communal act as Jews was the formation of a congregation. To begin with, they had no corporate community. The principle of church as separate from state did not offer special civil status to any religious community. The congregation they founded was organized by virtually every Jew then living in Rochester. These Jews might be

called "The Jewish Community." Yet, in practice, it was the congregation they had founded which was the Jewish community, for as we shall see, it was the congregation which served as the source and the sanction of all activities undertaken by Jews.

In America, then, "the Jewish community" was destined to be something other than it had been for so many centuries in Europe. As a result, the synagogue was also to become something different from what it had been before.

From the very first days of the Rochester congregation, the group was faced with the problem of caring for fellow Jews in need. No records are available but we can assume that as new immigrants moved along the route of the Erie Canal, some arrived in Rochester in need of help. They turned to the only semblance of organized Jewish life—the synagogue. While there is the suggestion that the first Hebrew Benevolent Society in Rochester was organized in 1850, it is most probable that the congregation itself acted as a Benevolent Society at this time.¹¹⁹

The manner in which the first formal charitable organization was formed sheds light on the role of the synagogue in the community. The congregation, as previously noted, had been worshiping for several years in rented rooms over 2 Front Street. When, in 1855, they were able to rent the Tabernacle Baptist Church they still retained the old synagogue for use on the High Holidays. To accommodate the visiting townspeople from nearby Brockport, Albion, and Palmyra, who joined them for the Holidays, they conducted two separate services in the fall of 1855. A Mr. Barnard, an English-born Jew who was engaged to act as teacher, was placed in charge of the "overflow" service in the new quarters at the church. Early in September, Rabbi Tuska, at a special dedicatory service marked by addresses in German and English, presented the scrolls of the *Torah* to Mr. Barnard for use at the Holiday Service.¹²⁰ Seats to nonmembers from adjoining towns were sold to cover the operating costs. We are told that the receipts exceeded the disbursements by \$196. This money is said to have been put aside for charitable purposes.¹²¹

Not long afterward, the congregation decided to organize the Hebrew Benevolent Society to function as its welfare arm. The \$196 set aside for charitable purposes was the Society's first source of

revenue. Then, after the Yom Kippur Holiday of 1856, the Society inaugurated a custom that was to be repeated annually for many years. To provide a yearly source of income the Society sponsored an Annual Ball a day or two after Yom Kippur. These balls proved to be more than financial successes; it was a mark of social distinction to attend and be seen. The first ball set the pattern for all the others. Here is an eyewitness account:

A Ball by a newly-formed Hebrew Benevolent Society had immense success. Not only nearly every Israelite attended but also an exceedingly large number of strangers. The ladies of Rochester there vindicated their fame for beauty, elegance, fashion and joyous tempers, to the rich strains of a numerous band, the light feet danced their merry round, and bright eyes laughed joyously till morning appeared.¹²²

The Society was launched. Each year thereafter the local press carried notices of "a large attendance; never a more pleasant ball."¹²³ These balls served many functions: they provided income for the work of the Society; they brought the Society's work to the attention of the entire community; they served as a medium for social intercourse for the Jews and non-Jews of Rochester. For many years, the Society continued to meet as an integral part of the congregation, although headed by its own set of officers. It was only in 1878, when the community was becoming more complex and when the congregation was no longer the only congregation in Rochester, that the Society became officially independent of Berith Kodesh and was incorporated.¹²⁴

The major concern of the Hebrew Benevolent Society was the traveling Jewish mendicant, or the new immigrant family that had just found its way to town. It remained for the "Gemilos Chesed Society" to supplement this work by caring for the local Jewish poor. Probably organized sometime before 1859, this Society was patterned after the model of a B'nai B'rith Lodge and functioned as an independent, secret lodge. While the Benevolent Society had a long and flourishing existence, the Gemilos Chesed Society was probably absorbed by the Zerubabel Lodge of the I.O.B.B. when it was formed in March, 1864. In 1859, the Gemilos Chesed Society had established a widows and orphans fund which in two years accumulated over \$1,000.¹²⁵ Ten years later the B'nai B'rith

Zerubabel Lodge reactivated the widows and orphans fund by forming a special corporation "to give aid and relief to widows and orphans of deceased members of said society and to give aid and relief to such persons, members of said association, and others as said society shall determine."¹²⁶

The women were also beginning to take a vital interest in community affairs. We may assume that from the very beginning they aided the charitable work by supplying the needy with food and clothing which they had prepared and made. They were soon offering their talents for handicraft to the community. A group of women met to design and embroider a curtain for the Torah Ark. This was a proud piece of work and was warmly received by the men.¹²⁷

In 1865, the women decided to establish a separate benevolent society. While they had heretofore worked individually within the Hebrew Benevolent Society, apparently the time was ripe for utilizing their special talents in a separate ladies' organization. Their organization was called "The Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society."¹²⁸

It is no coincidence that this was also the time when women's groups, separate from men's organizations, were beginning to make their appearance in various parts of the country. The women's rights movement was already showing signs of penetration into the group life of America.¹²⁹

The early settlers were concerned with welfare problems from the very beginning. But they were faced with many problems of personal adjustment. To earn a livelihood many had to peddle over a wide area, remaining away from home for days at a time. What interest they had in charity was clearly focused on their own community; they could not see beyond Rochester. Thus, in 1850, when Aaron Selig journeyed to Rochester in behalf of the distressed of Palestine, he received no contributions from local Jews. It was then that Tuska took occasion, as we have seen, to repeat Isaac Wise's statement. Among other things he had noted that "many of our members are absent from the City . . . it is a lamentable feature of the total absence of national love among our brethren the remnants of Israel, that even the rich . . . withdraw their hands from the needy. . . ." For these first settlers "the

"needy" were only the local needy. They were not yet ripe for "national love."

They kept abreast of the conditions of Jews in other parts of America and Europe by reading the weekly Jewish periodicals.¹³⁰ Yet not until 1859 did the community bestir itself to consider the needs of Jews elsewhere. Late in 1858 an incident took place in Europe which shocked the Jews of America. A Jewish child named Edgar Mortara had been secretly baptized by his Catholic nurse in Bologna and was then removed forcibly from his parents by order of the Pope. Jews in many parts of the country were aroused as never before. Large protest meetings were held. The Mortara child was not returned to his parents. American Jews realized that they needed some organized, country-wide union or alliance not only for themselves, but to aid their distressed brethren elsewhere. In France, the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* was organized as a result of the Mortara affair. Here, in America, the incident resulted in the formation of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites. The American Jewish community was just beginning to see the need for linking itself with the world-wide Jewish community.

The Mortara case had its echo in Rochester. Responding to the challenge it raised, local Jews sponsored a large protest meeting, thus identifying themselves for the first time with sister Jewish communities here and abroad. On January 20, 1859, they gathered to give voice to their feeling of indignation.¹³¹ The effect of this community experience on Rochester Jews was not unlike that achieved by Jews in other cities. They, too, like the American Jewish community itself, were now beginning to become more closely identified with the broader Jewish world.

When a second messenger from Palestine came in the summer of 1861, they did not then greet him with indifference. The congregation forwarded \$25 to Reverend S. M. Isaacs¹³² and received an acknowledgment which noted the gift with pleasure, particularly "amid the general indifference on religious matters, [and] in view of the more engrossing national difficulties."¹³³ Again, in 1862, the congregation offered a like amount to a third messenger from Palestine.¹³⁴ With but one exception, however, the custom of personal, individual contributions had not yet developed. Elias Ettenheimer, apparently, was the only one to make a contribution,

which amounted to \$3.00. It was still the congregation that acted in behalf of the entire community. Five years later, however, when other messengers from Palestine arrived, they did receive a congregational gift. In addition about twenty men made personal contributions.¹³⁵

The Mortara affair, in a sense, had a still further local repercussion. We have noted its effect upon the organization in France of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*. In the early summer of 1865, there was founded in Rochester a local society of the *Alliance*; Rabbi Guinzberg, desiring to help the organization, had sent out a call for aid, and in response, a local branch was formed. It was headed by Simon Hays as president, Gabriel Wile as vice-president, and Joseph Wile as treasurer. In a way it was another extension of congregational leadership. The prominence of the men heading this group helped in securing many contributions.¹³⁶ We have no further record of the work of the *Alliance*, locally. We assume, however, that it existed as a dormant group, helping to arrange contributions to the parent organization when necessary.¹³⁷

The demands for charity made upon Jews were still relatively few, and the organizational structure for the dispensing of these gifts was a simple one. Yet, in a little more than two decades of organized community life, the Jews of Rochester showed signs of progress and development. Their local charities were acclaimed and widely respected by the general community. Their women were already active in welfare work and were slowly identifying themselves with national charitable and welfare groups. Their synagogue served as the inspiration for the organization of their charities. But the benevolent society did not exist as a thing apart from the congregation, as a competing interest. Those active in the synagogue were those who were active in the Hebrew Benevolent Society. Not only was the synagogue the parent of the Jewish community, it was, as yet, coextensive with the Jewish community.

PART TWO

*The East European Community
1870–1900*

THE FIRST JEWS FROM EAST EUROPE

BY 1870 the German-Jewish community had established the foundation for an integrated life in the New World. When newcomers from East Europe began to arrive and settle, there was at first very little common ground between the two communities. Twenty years of life in Rochester had built a chasm of wide proportions separating the old Jewish settler from the new. It was perhaps not merely a question of twenty years. More than all else the Civil War had played its Americanizing role; it had altered the social, economic, and religious position of Rochester Jews. The East European Jew was a creature from another world and at first he was looked upon by these early settlers with indifference for his numbers were insignificant. When, after 1870, his relatives and friends joined him here, barriers between the two groups came to be established. There was little social intercourse between them and a distinctly new and different community structure was built by the East Europeans. Even the non-Jews saw these two groups as distinct and separate.¹ In a sense, it was as if people of a different faith, of different national origin and habit had moved to Rochester.

When did East European Jews begin to arrive in Rochester? Sources which might supply the answer are meager. It is barely possible that some Polish Jews had arrived as early as 1855. If there were any Polish Jews at that time, they were very few in number and were absorbed by the larger German- and English-Jewish environment. Our only source for this dating indicates that "the congregation consists of Germans, Englishmen, and Poles who are all acting in harmony."²

We must assume, however, that Polish Jews began to filter into

Rochester in small numbers just as the Civil War came to an end. The first such arrivals came from Suvolk and Grajewo, Poland. With hardly any money or possessions they found their way on foot or by wagon to Hamburg and from this port they boarded a boat that took them to England. There they remained until they could pay for passage for the month's journey to America. The very first among them had no special destination in America. On shipboard, family legend has it, several learned from fellow voyagers that Rochester was a thriving city, smaller than New York and less crowded. Others, landing in New York, found themselves without much opportunity and there received the advice to move westward, farther upstate. By 1867 the handful in Rochester had increased enough to permit the formation of "a minyan of Polish Jews,"³ which probably met in a private room. Those who came in the two years following the war sent home word of their new life. The earliest settlers, Meyer Greenstone, Aaron and Myer Nusbaum, Abraham and Joseph Minsky, Mauritz Underberg, and several others moved into Atwater, Chatham, Joiner, and Nassau streets. This was the major Jewish neighborhood. Not unlike their German predecessors in the city, the Polish Jews, as they found some means of livelihood, sent for brothers and sisters and other relatives. Those who came boarded in the flats of the first arrivals. The cycle of adjustment to the new environment followed the pattern established twenty years before. The new immigrants huddled together in a small area and began their Rochester life as peddlers. Some did menial work as porters. We do hear of one, however, who opened a "variety store" on State Street "near the city line."⁴

Little is known about their activities until 1870. In that year enough of them had come to Rochester to encourage the formation of a full-fledged congregation. They took the name *Sheves Achim*. In August, their trustees purchased a lot from the city's Mt. Hope Cemetery Association as their burial ground.⁵ They did not wish to join Berith Kodesh and thus asserted their own group identity by this symbolic purchase of their own burial ground. Berith Kodesh had, a few months before, completed arrangements for the purchase of a large plot at Mt. Hope; yet the new arrivals from Poland, keeping a separate identity and founding their own congregation, were determined to keep their burials separate. De-

spite this feeling, however, the new plot adjoined the earlier one of the German Jews. Although they were independent of the older settlers, the East Europeans at least placed their plot next to a "Jewish cemetery."

For some unknown reason the Sheves Achim group was disturbed by inner dissension. Less than a year later several members seceded to form a new congregation known as Bene Sholom. By June, 1871, they too were ready to buy their own cemetery. It was not until 1874 that the two congregations were brought together again when, in June of that year, they reunited to form congregation Beth Israel. All properties of both congregations, burial grounds, and religious regalia were transferred to Beth Israel.⁶ They were now able to move to larger quarters so they rented a hall in Jordan's Block (Main Street) and invited a Mr. Gluck of Cincinnati to conduct their religious services.⁷

As their community life began to take form, the East European group found themselves in need of caring for the immigrants who were now beginning to come in larger numbers. They established the Berith Sholem Society in 1873. This was not a community-wide undertaking. It was a mutual aid society, "affording pecuniary aid and relief to its sick, indigent or reduced members and their widows and children and to promote material comfort and moral welfare of its members."⁸ In the meantime no formal methods had been established for the ritual procedures involved in burying their dead. Probably not long after they acquired the cemetery ground at Mt. Hope, they gathered to establish a Burial Society, the Hevra Kadisha. By 1876, this group was incorporated under the name of the Congregation Cabra Kadische of the Jewish Church. They were then meeting in a room at 100 St. Joseph Street.⁹

Their numbers continued to increase. After 1875 a new group of Polish Jews began to arrive. These new arrivals found their place in the strengthened community which had been reunited the year before. By 1877 Beth Israel Congregation was secure enough to incorporate as a religious society. Among its incorporators were Barnett Levy, Jacob Rosenbloom, Kalman Bardin, Simon Colonick, Morris Unterberg, David Kaminsky, and Isaac Lipski, who had been among the first of the settlers some years before.¹⁰

Slowly, the Yiddish which they spoke began to include many

English phrases. The minute book of Beth Israel indicates how their language underwent changes as they lived in Rochester. "Ge-muffed, ge-sekond und ge-passt"—moved, seconded, and passed, punctuated every adopted resolution. Other assimilated phrases and ideas crept into their language and modes of expression.¹¹ The community was not only showing signs of adjusting to the new environment, it was also becoming more heterogeneous. Jews from various parts of East Europe were beginning to make their way to Rochester. The clothing factories were an important attraction, although few of these immigrants worked in the factories themselves; for the most part they worked for contract tailors who, in turn, were responsible to the larger factories. The contractors supplied space in rented stores; here employment conditions were not always sanitary and hours were long and hard. But there was a single most important advantage. They were working on intimate terms with their immediate employers, at the side of other recent Jewish arrivals. This enabled them to observe their Sabbaths and holy days without difficulty. Often, in such shops, the entire working force were Jews of East European origin and all were freed from their work on Saturday. To make up for this, they worked on Sunday.

The Beth Israel Congregation was increasing in numbers and in importance. For years they had conducted services in rented quarters. In the summer of 1879, they were planning to dedicate their newly erected building at 54 Chatham Street. The event was a significant one, because for the first time members of the German-Jewish group participated in their celebration. Dr. Max Landsberg, rabbi of Berith Kodesh, was invited to preach the dedicatory sermon in English.¹² A national Jewish periodical commented that "pleasant feelings exist between the two congregations."¹³

The Dedication Service apparently brought the old and the new Polish groups together for the first time. Yet once again dissension rent the Orthodox community. A new group, known at first as Ahavas Achim Congregation, organized sometime in 1878 and purchased a small cemetery at Mt. Hope.¹⁴ The purchase of the plot apparently gave them independence in the eyes of the community and a month later, we assume, they incorporated under the name of Chevra Tillem Society.¹⁵ By 1879, another group was incorpo-

rated as the Achi Sholom Congregation.¹⁶ This congregation was apparently a splinter from the Chevra Tillem Society. It did not last more than a half-dozen years, and was probably absorbed back into the parent congregation in 1884.¹⁷ The Chevra Tillem and the Beth Israel congregations continued to be the major Orthodox synagogues. In 1882 the Chevra Tillem group, after reorganizing, established its quarters at 5 Herman Street. It became known as the B'nai David Congregation. A few years later it moved to 38 McDonald Avenue.¹⁸ It, too, had purchased its own cemetery plot at Mt. Hope, in 1887.¹⁹

About this time, in 1882, new groups began to arrive from Russia, in the wake of the pogroms in that country. Some joined the existing Orthodox congregations. Others felt it necessary to found their own groups. A B'nai Israel Congregation was formed in 1882.²⁰ It continued its separate existence for four years and then was persuaded to join the older Beth Israel in a body. In 1886 all the scrolls of the Torah and all the properties of this group were transferred to the Beth Israel Congregation. But the Beth Israel group had suffered a defection from the ranks two years earlier. For reasons unknown, a group, clustering around Aaron, Myer, and Simon Nusbaum, seceded to form a new congregation. They called themselves B'nai Aviezer, the Children of Aviezer, in honor of their deceased father. They absorbed a congregation that had been worshiping in a third story of the Shaefer Block, at the corner of Kelly and St. Joseph streets. This was apparently the small Achi Sholem group which had disbanded in 1884.²¹ Two other congregations were formed at this time, consisting of recent immigrants who did not want to be identified with the older settlers. One called itself Congregation Ouzire Dollim (Helpers of the Poor) and met for worship on Edward Street.²² The other incorporated as Congregation Ahavas Achim and worshiped in a house on Pryor, near Hanover Street.²³ Four years after its incorporation in 1892, this "Congregation of Friendly Brothers" erected a new synagogue on Rhine Street, near Hudson Avenue, at a cost of \$6,000 and dedicated it amidst great fanfare and civic ceremony. Gradually this group attracted a large number of immigrant tailors, and in 1896 became known as the Congregation of Tailors, the Chevra Chayteem.²⁴

In the earlier period, laymen had managed the affairs of the

Orthodox community. Kalman Bardin, who had settled about 1870, was the butcher, *shohet*, and ritual leader of the first congregation.²⁵

By 1885, after a decade and a half of growth, Beth Israel invited Rabbi Levenson to come as their rabbi, and, in effect, to serve as the rabbi of all the Orthodox synagogues. Not long after Rabbi Levenson's arrival, Beth Israel, continuing its steady development, was ready to move from its old building at Chatham Street to a new building in Leopold Street. In September, 1866, a Dedication Service was conducted. Excitement was high. A band played. Auctioning took place for the privilege of carrying the scrolls from the old synagogue to the new and offerings ranged from twenty-five cents to \$4.00. As the ceremonies began, the synagogue door was unlocked by the President, Jacob Lipsky. The doors opened to a magnificent sight: a beautiful synagogue with a seating capacity of eight hundred people. Rabbi Levenson gave an address in Yiddish and leading laymen of the Reform community also spoke. Henry Michaels represented Berith Kodesh, E. S. Ettenheimer the Aitz Chayim Congregation, and David Mosely represented the Berith Oulam group.²⁶ Visiting rabbis from Elmira and St. Louis then addressed the assemblage.²⁷ The success of the congregation was attested to by the speakers as they pointed to the huge room and the basement fitted up for school purposes. The \$15,000 this would cost indicated the good financial condition of the congregation.²⁸ The congregation had cause to be proud of its achievements.

Yet new dissension soon broke out in the community. B'nai Aviezer, after a series of disputes with Beth Israel decided to dissociate itself from Rabbi Levenson's rabbinic leadership. A butcher, Mr. Amdoursky, who was a member of B'nai Aviezer, refused to be supervised by Rabbi Levenson. In the dispute, B'nai Aviezer took sides with Mr. Amdoursky and repudiated the rabbinate of Rabbi Levenson. In December, 1888, they called Lesser Anikster of Chicago as their rabbi, at a salary of \$600 a year. And, not to be outdone by Beth Israel, they planned to build a new building on Chatham Street at a cost of \$10,000.²⁹ The next year they did build a new synagogue and in its honor they renamed the congregation Beth Hakneses Hachodesh, or "The New Synagogue."

Yet, Beth Israel continued to be the leading Orthodox congregation. One source indicates that for the High Holidays of 1887, the

sale of seats at Beth Israel amounted to \$900, while B'nai Aviezer netted \$400 and B'nai David \$200. The small and new immigrant group Ouzire Dollim sold only \$50 worth of seats at the New Year service.³⁰

There were few, if any, ritual divisions between these congregations. Beth Israel looked upon itself as the pioneer Orthodox congregation and was self-conscious about this role. By this time many of Beth Israel's members had grown children, who had been born in Rochester, and there was some need, it was felt, to bring these young people closer to the synagogue. Since Rabbi Levenson seemed unable to do this, the congregation was looking for someone to attract the youth.³¹ This desire prompted the group to invite Rabbi Solomon S. Kohn of Buffalo, who addressed the congregation in English. This revolutionary event, which took place in July, 1889, was apparently trumpeted throughout the city by the congregation.³² Rabbi Levenson, struggling in the midst of congregational ferment, remained until June, 1891, when he left Rochester for Baltimore.

The Hebrew School for children conducted by Beth Israel was also an innovation. Until this time all Orthodox Jewish instruction was given privately in the homes. Poor children had little opportunity for such instruction, although devout parents would often sacrifice everything for the sake of the Jewish instruction of their little ones. The new building on Leopold Street was the first step in the direction of a publicly sponsored program for Orthodox Jewish education. In later years a Sunday school was organized and the basement of the Leopold Street Synagogue served as a club-house for young Jewish boys and girls.

The English sermon at the Leopold Street congregation was a forerunner of things to come in the older Orthodox community. This was an overt demonstration of an inner ferment, of movement toward change. Yet piety and ritual observance were still popular and were regarded as respectable. Synagogues were crowded with worshipers. Officers and trustees took their work very seriously and promulgated rules which emphasized the strict requirements for congregational officeholders. In one congregation it was necessary that officers come to synagogue every Saturday and Holiday. If they were absent from the synagogue on three successive Sabbaths, their

office was declared vacant and elections might be held. Members, too, had many obligations. If, at a congregational meeting, a member failed to come to order after three requests, the president had the right to fine him twenty-five cents.³³ The following constitutional rules of the Beth Hakneses Hachodesh give us an idea of the seriousness with which congregational responsibilities were taken:

- #28 "When a member is (God forbid) sick it is the duty of the president and vice-president to visit him twice a week—no less than once a week."
- #29 "Shivah—must send a minyan if necessary—if no children congregation must hire someone to say Kaddish."
- #33 "Every officer must come to synagogue every Saturday and Holiday. If president, vice-president and secretary—don't come on three successive times—they lose their office and the Society may hold elections. Except if the aforementioned are incapacitated or out of the city—in this case—they lose their office after 60 days."
- #34 "Duty of President: to come to synagogue Saturdays and Holidays and keep order and to distribute Aliyot—as he sees fit—except on Yom Kippur and all holidays when the Aliyot should be sold."³⁴

The Orthodox community was soon to be rent by divisions again. The continued rivalries between congregations were due in no small measure to the differences in customs which the various groups brought here from the old country. In Europe, many prejudices had existed among Galician, Polish, and Russian Jews. Each had established regional customs and tended to look askance at attitudes which differed from their own. Beth Israel and Beth Hakneses Hachodesh for a few years had been under separate rabbinic leadership. But since both Rabbis Anikster and Levenson left in 1891, Rabbi Abraham Rosen, formerly rabbi of Vilki near Kovno, was brought to Rochester, in 1892, and was invited to head all of the Orthodox congregations in the city. Beth Israel, as the largest, paid the greatest share of his salary. For reasons unknown, in 1894 all but Beth Israel withdrew their contribution to the rabbi's salary. Beth Israel alone continued to pay his salary and then in March, 1895, feeling it could no longer continue to do this,

severed its relations with the rabbi. A great storm of protest broke out in the Orthodox community. Meetings were held far into the night in Goldstein's Hall at Chatham and Kelly streets. It was discovered that at the heart of the problem was the question of kosher ritual slaughtering.

This angry outburst had succeeded in arraying the Orthodox community against itself. Rabbi Rosen's contract with the Beth Israel Congregation was to be officially terminated on July 16. The next morning the entire Rochester community was informed of what had transpired. The local *Democrat and Chronicle* headlined an elaborate description of the affair in these words: "Rabbi Rosen Installed. . . . He Finds a Synagogue to Give Him Shelter. . . . Police Protection Had been Asked By The Friends of the Rabbi, but There Was No Need to Call Upon the Officers." Then, in a graphic report the story unfolded in an almost melodramatic manner:

. . . The rabbi's friends assembled at the synagogue Benai David on Hanover Street, where they were marshalled into line by Nathan Greenberg to the number of about sixty and proceeded thence accompanied by a part of the police detail and several hundred of whooping and yelling children, aged from 4 to 14, to the residence of the rabbi at No. 104 Kelly Street. Several cheers were given for Rabbi Rosen, when the procession arrived at the residence and a deputation of venerable appearing and gray-whiskered Jewish Elders entered the residence and soon re-appeared on the street, with the rabbi in their midst. He was escorted about the streets of the neighborhood for a short time, but the procession, very sensibly avoided the vicinity of the Leopold Street synagogue . . .

. . . The friends of Rabbi Rosen stated that the congregation of Beth Israel or its leaders had insisted that the rabbi should interpret the Jewish law only as they desired it to be interpreted. When he had declined to do this they had discharged him. The present movement was for the purpose of restoring the rabbi to his religious liberty, so that he would not be under obligation to anyone. . . . An organization was effected last May, soon after the congregation Beth Israel notified the rabbi that his time would expire on July 16 and the association was composed of 700 members. The society's name is Waad Hakolel and many of its members are as yet connected with some one of the four orthodox Jewish churches in the city. The society does not intend to

erect a church edifice at present but will content itself with maintaining the rabbi whose salary of \$14 per week will be paid by the Waad Hakolel and the congregation of Benai David, which has also espoused the cause of the rabbi.³⁵

To get to the other side of the story, the reporter had sought out the president of Beth Israel congregation for an interview. This discussion produced an interesting report:

President Rosenbloom was very severe in his characterization of the members of the Waad Hakolel who he claimed were mostly socialists, who contributed little or nothing toward the support of the church and who perfected what organization they have in a dance hall, which was, in his opinion, a most improper place to hold meetings to take action upon religious matters.

Then, proceeding to interpret to the reporter the institutional character of Judaism, Rosenbloom explained:

a rabbi does not necessarily occupy the same position in the Orthodox Jewish church that a priest or minister does in a Christian church. He is an expounder and interpreter of the law. . . . Several churches may join in the services of one rabbi but a cantor is necessary for each congregation.

When asked about the future plans of the Beth Israel congregation, Rosenbloom indicated that "we have taken no definite steps to secure a rabbi in place of Rabbi Rosen, although we may do so. There is no hurry."³⁶

In spite of Rosenbloom's adamant position, the debate over *kashruth* supervision gave birth to a new congregation. The Vaad Hakolel Society, organized in 1895, did not immediately proceed to erect its own synagogue. It did purchase a cemetery plot of its own for its members, but it worshiped for a few years together with the B'nai David group on McDonald Avenue (Baden Street). Rabbi Rosen served as their spiritual leader. Then, late in 1898, B'nai David moved to No. 32 Hanover Street, and the Vaad Hakolel Congregation remained on McDonald Avenue. By 1906 it was strong enough to purchase a house at No. 6 Hanover Street. Four years later it erected its own synagogue edifice on the adjoining property. The Vaad Hakolel Congregation was popularly known as the Coxey Shul, apparently a label that was given it during the process of its

organization, in 1894, when "Coxey's Army" had marched on Washington, D.C.³⁷ There were now in Rochester a half-dozen Orthodox congregations, including a small Hasidic group organized in 1892, as the Agudas Achim Nusach Ari. They conducted services in a single room of a building at the corner of Nassau and Chatham streets.³⁸

Beth Israel did call another rabbi a few months after the dramatic dispute had come to a close. He was Rabbi David Ginsberg, who soon was looked upon as the local authority on Jewish law. But the *kashruth* problem was as ticklish and involved as ever. Not long after his arrival in Rochester Rabbi Ginsberg joined Rabbi Rosen in banning meat slaughtered by slaughterers who were the business partners of butchers. This, they claimed, was the cause of the intrigue in *kashruth* control. The ritual slaughterers were actually involved in the butcher business. As a result, they were not scrupulous about the requirements of Jewish law in their desire to make business profits. Rabbi Solomon Finkelstein of nearby Syracuse came to the city and joined Rabbis Rosen and Ginsberg in outlawing such arrangements.³⁹

But this was not the end of the matter; two years later *kashruth* again caused a community flare-up. Again the dispute found its way into the press. Rabbi Abraham Rosen had issued a personal ban (*herem*) upon the president of the B'nai David Congregation, Bernard Lorber. Mr. Lorber was connected with a local meat market and some undisclosed matter bearing upon *kashruth* was at the core of the problem. Rabbi Rosen's proscription of Lorber was an extreme use, if not abuse, of rabbinical authority. He enjoined all the members of the congregation to have nothing to do with the president, announcing that "no one can go within four yards of him."⁴⁰

Thus, as the twentieth century neared, the Orthodox community had not yet found a solution to its internal dissensions. Although, on at least one occasion Rabbi David Ginsberg publicly bemoaned the fact that these issues were aired in a "secular journal," hardly a major inner conflict escaped the notice of the press.⁴¹ In fact, it became habitual for the various antagonists to issue "statements" to the newspapers, in which they not only defended themselves, but also heaped abuse upon the heads of their opponents.

The comparative calm of 1875, when there was only one Ortho-

dox congregation in the community, must have evoked sighs of nostalgia among the older East European settlers. In the twenty-five years that had followed, in the name of tradition the strength of organized tradition had been seriously weakened.

5

*EARLY RELATIONS: GERMANS AND
EAST EUROPEANS*

THE 1881 pogroms in Russia began to shatter Jewish life in Eastern Europe. A new migration of large proportions was set in motion. The Russian violence was to have a profound effect upon the course of Jewish life all over the world; every major Jewish community in America was to feel its impact. The simple, comparatively unperturbed Jewish society of Rochester was to receive many of these persecuted Russian Jews. But it was to be more than a reception—the new wave of immigration was to revolutionize the whole structure and direction of Jewish life in Rochester.

Had those Jews from Poland who had arrived before 1880 not been reinforced by the large number of new Russian immigrants who soon came, there is little doubt that, before long, they would have been assimilated into Rochester's German-Jewish community. In 1875, there were probably no more than 3,000 Jews in the city. Of this number a large majority were German Jews.¹ By 1880, East European Jews in Rochester could not have numbered more than 500 souls.² While they were not as yet involved in German-Jewish community life, their own life was still not well entrenched or diversified. Their children were born in Rochester and were attending Public School #9 with some of the German-Jewish children. While some minor dissensions had occurred, there was virtually only one congregation, Beth Israel, known to the community as "the Polish Synagogue." The Polish-Jewish group may very well have been engulfed, after a generation, by the earlier German group. But the influx of almost a thousand East European Jews in

the next decade changed the direction of Jewish life in Rochester.³ The monolithic, homogeneous Jewish society of 1870 was soon to become "a community of communities."

The settled German-Jewish community in America was avowedly hostile to the newcomer, the immigrant Russian Jew. A local newspaper, in 1882, had taken note of this situation and reprinted on its front page a lengthy article on this subject. The article took issue with the German Jew and described in glowing terms the prospective contribution which Russian Jews could be expected to make.⁴ It is apparently no coincidence that in the same issue the editor commented very favorably on the newly organized local Jewish Society for Russian refugees. He was gratified to know that local Jews whom he considered financially able were not following the pattern of "heartlessness and inattention" shown by the Jews of Buffalo and of New York city.⁵ The first reactions of the local German-Jewish community were apparently friendly and cooperative. While there may have been open hostility in other cities, the Rochester community was desirous of extending its help. Aside from purely emotional motivations, the large clothing manufacturers who headed the new relief organization, may also have been thinking of the opportunities for cheap, skilled manpower. They arranged for a mass meeting in the Berith Kodesh Temple, on St. Paul Street. Elias Ettenheimer presided and explained that the Benevolent Society was unable to care for the additional burden created by the refugees. It was, therefore, necessary to organize a new society to provide "better means for caring for the Russian-Jewish refugees." It was his hope that the work of the organization would have broad support. They were seeking 1,000 members who would pay dues of ten cents a week. It was hoped that \$5,000 would pay for the expected relief costs. That very night 94 people joined as members. Ettenheimer was elected president.⁶ To Rochester, in 1882, 26 men, 3 women, and 7 children came from Russia by prior arrangement with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.⁷ This was more than twice the number that had come either to Buffalo or to Syracuse.⁸

Rochester's clothing factories apparently were attracting the attention of the immigrants. They came not only through the regular Jewish channels of HIAS, in New York, but also "from Boston,

Canada, and directly from England without stopping over in New York.”⁹

In the first years following the pogroms, the Rochester Jewish community did not chafe under the burden of refugee relief. While more Russian Jews were coming to Rochester than to any other upstate city, the numbers were still not great enough to cause alarm. But the flow was constant and consistent. After six years of helpfulness there began to be heard sounds of rebellion against having to receive a continuing number of newcomers. Of course, the older settlers never admitted their feelings to the general public. Whenever difficulties arose, or whenever they were questioned publicly regarding the immigrants, Jewish leaders were quick to indicate that they favored continued immigration.

Soon after 1890, when anti-immigration sentiment swept across the country and the Knights of Labor were opposed to alien, immigrant workers, Jewish leaders in Rochester spoke out strongly in behalf of the newcomers. On one occasion Dr. Max Landsberg and David Hays were interviewed by the Rochester *Post-Express* regarding their views on immigration. Both agreed that immigration benefited the country. Landsberg opined that “it is not in the best interest of our country to restrict immigration, but singly to watch and regulate it by rigidly and honestly enforcing the new laws.”¹⁰

That same year a party of eleven Russian Jews, who had sailed from Hamburg, arrived at Charlotte via Port Hope. The city began an investigation of the immigrants. The local immigration commissioner, taken aback by this irregularity, telegraphed Washington for instructions. The German-Jewish community loyally stood by the immigrants in this dramatic moment. Dr. Landsberg notified the city authorities that the local Jewish community would assume full responsibility for the group. He went down to the pier to see them and after arranging matters he declared, in a newspaper statement, that “they are young and strong and will not become public charges . . . and I do not doubt that they will make good citizens.”¹¹ The local *Jewish Tidings*, in an editorial obviously geared to its non-Jewish readers, honestly defended the Russian Jewish immigrant. The editor maintained that “it is extremely doubtful whether any class of immigrant would rate as high.” Combatting the antiforeign attitude current among labor groups, he boasts that

"90% of them come here possessed of useful trades. [This] is one of the most powerful and best arguments in their behalf, and the fact that they quickly adopt American notions should make them the friends and not the foes of the better class of American working-men."¹²

Yet, while the German Jews were prepared to defend their Russian coreligionists publicly, privately they had come to regard them as a threat to their own secure position in America. Amongst themselves they were open and frank about the situation. They were not anxious that more East European Jews come to their community. In 1889, a London committee of Jews wrote to some Jewish organizations in various cities in America for information regarding their experiences with Jewish immigration. In their reply, the United Jewish Charities of Rochester revealed a deep-seated hostility to these newcomers. All that remained of their earlier solicitude was the desire to appear as a united community before the eyes of the non-Jew. The immigrant Jews, they felt, really "are a bane to the country and a curse to the Jews. The Jews have earned an enviable reputation in the United States, but this has been undermined by the influx of thousands who are not ripe for the enjoyment of liberty and equal rights, and all who mean well for the Jewish name should prevent them as much as possible from coming there. The expenses of the charity teaches that organized immigration from Russia, Roumania, and other semi-barbarous countries is a mistake and has proved a failure. It is no relief to the Jews of Russia, Poland, etc. and it jeopardizes the well-being of the American Jews."¹³

Their own words betray the reasons for their change in attitude. When Russian-Jewish numbers were smaller, when it did not seem that their flow would turn into an immigrant wave, elementary humanitarianism was not too burdensome. When, after five years, the stream did not abate, but, on the contrary, promised to continue its rapid rate, the East European Jew came to represent a threat to their own way of life. They were in danger of being overwhelmed, of losing their coveted position in the community by being identified with people who were not "ripe for the enjoyment of liberty and equal rights."

Their anxieties were obviously heightened in January, 1889,

when six Jewish immigrants received mysterious, threatening letters. At the top of the letters, in red ink appeared a skeleton head with two drawn swords. The letters were signed "White Caps, Branch #5." The recipients were warned that if they did not leave Rochester in six months, they would be burned together with their houses and possessions. They were cautioned to inform their fellow Jews from Russia and Poland that the same fate would await them.

The entire Jewish community was aroused. Antiforeign sentiments were sweeping across the East and Midwest. Yet no one seemed to know what caused these local threats. Speculations flew about on all sides. Some said that the cause was a recent dispute some days before between the Kosher butchers and the slaughterers, which even the local newspapers had reported.¹⁴ Some felt that the recent election of Benjamin Harrison, which some local people had attributed to Jewish support, stirred up the antagonism. Still others attributed the antagonism to the fact that the Jewish immigrants worked on Sunday and rested on Saturday. The Jewish peddlers, selling their wares in full view of non-Jews on Sunday, were really responsible for the bad feeling, they stressed.¹⁵

Actually, very little came of these threats. The police were inclined to look upon the matter as a youthful prank. Nevertheless, a year later numerous Jewish peddlers were treated roughly in certain parts of the city. A special policeman was appointed to patrol St. Joseph Street, which was now the center of the new Jewish immigration.¹⁶

The White Caps' threat helped widen the breach between the German and the East European Jewish communities. For the German group, it was an open thrust at their established position, a foreboding of even more unbearable embarrassments. To the Orthodox group, the Germans seemed to play a villainous role in the melodrama. They felt that many Reform Jews helped to add credence to the prejudice that the East European Jews were indeed unassimilable foreigners. Moreover, the growing desire among some Berith Kodesh members to make Sunday the Jewish Sabbath was interpreted by the Orthodox Jews as an immoral attempt to gain the regard of non-Jews by divesting Judaism of all customs that might make it appear foreign.¹⁷

While all public statements made by responsible Jewish leaders

defended the new immigrants, many were opposed to their foreign ways. The antiforeign element in the country had stirred up enough tensions to cause many Jews to develop an obsession over every possible manifestation of strangeness. This attitude is curiously manifested in the reaction of the *Jewish Tidings* to the arrival in New York city of Rabbi Jacob Joseph as the "Chief Rabbi of the Russian-Polish Jews in America." The *Tidings* had made the outspoken request that "He should go back to the land that gave him birth. . . . He is utterly useless in America and will soon find it out."¹⁸

The *American Hebrew* of New York had taken issue with this view of the *Jewish Tidings*, claiming that "the only discordant voice that had been heard thus far is the ludicrous voice of the *Jewish Tidings* which asked 'What do we need of an immigrant and prejudiced rabbi?'"

A reply to this criticism evoked the retort from the *Tidings*:

Rabbi Joseph is unfamiliar with the language of this country and is therefore unfitted to exercise authority, or influence over American Jews. The Jews of this country do not need a Grand Rabbi and one from a foreign country; one who is reared among the prejudices and bigotries of the Eastern countries will certainly prove an obstacle to the people over whom he is expected to exercise control.¹⁹

The general atmosphere of prejudice against foreigners coupled with the tenacious desire of the new arrivals to retain their own ways emphasized the division within the Jewish community.²⁰ By 1890 there was hardly any common ground for German Jews and East European Jews in Rochester. In less than ten years of Russian-Jewish immigration the community had lost its earlier balance and calm.

One cogent reason for this condition was offered by a young man of the East European segment. Recognizing that antagonism existed between Orthodox and Reform Jews on matters of doctrine, he suggested that:

. . . another great barrier that stifles the spirit of human brotherhood between our people is the classes that have been formed based on differences in economic conditions. The rich Jew who stands upon the universal pedestal of rich men is a modern production. And the sympathy

which formerly existed between the rich and the poor Jew owing to their persecution by the common enemy is now almost entirely supplanted by cold charity and colder philanthropy. . . . We cannot deny the fact that the relation of employer and employee between Jews cannot and is not regulated by Jewish law which is just to both.²¹

This chasm would remain until a new generation arose in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Two worlds had been brought together, but they could not easily be made one. In the melting pot very little had melted.

6

LIFE AMONG EAST EUROPEANS

A WELL-ESTABLISHED community may assume a variety of negative attitudes toward newcomers: antagonism, hostility, condescension, or indifference. In Rochester, German Jews viewed their East European coreligionists with wary eyes, and at one time or another were motivated by one or all of these feelings.

Just as the German Jews were obliged to develop their own self-sufficient social and fraternal life, distinct from the general community, so the East European Jews found it necessary to establish separate social clubs from those of the German Jews. The social distance between German Jew and the non-Jew was equivalent to the chasm that separated the social worlds of the older and the newer Jewish communities.

As the stream of Polish and Russian Jews became mightier, the older settlers found themselves living side by side with their new arrivals. It did not take long for this situation to change. German Jews, as early as 1880, were beginning to move as far south as Union Street, while Oregon, Chatham, and Joiner streets were being populated by the newcomers. As soon as their financial situation permitted, the German Jews joined the exodus southward, where new homes were being built.

Living conditions among the newcomers were not very good. They came to old homes and their large families crowded the few bare rooms they could afford to rent. To help supplement the family income young boys would sell charcoal, matches, and other sundries in the street. The most popular enterprise was the "newspaper business," and the sight of teen-age "entrepreneurs," became a landmark in the community. Jewish immigrant boys hawked

their newspapers up and down the town; a remarkable *esprit de corps* existed among them and before long they formed "trade associations." Dr. William C. Gannett, who came to Rochester in 1889 as the minister of the First Unitarian Church, was one of the leading liberal spirits of the community. It was he who took up the idea from Mrs. Sarah Blackall to establish the Boys' Evening Home, an evening school for newsboys. "Mother" Blackall as the boys called her, together with Dr. Gannett and an active women's group, harnessed the energy of these resourceful newsboys to creative and cultural pursuits. A large number of Jewish boys came regularly to the Home. Among those who were active participants in the Home were Samuel Goldenson and Louis Witkofsky, who later became rabbis, Louis Lipsky, later an outstanding Zionist leader, and Meyer Jacobstein, who became a Congressman.¹ A large group of immigrant boys preferred to come to the Boys' Evening Home rather than to meet under German-Jewish auspices. The local *Jewish Tidings* went so far as to call upon "the Jewish citizens of Rochester [to] extend hearty and enthusiastic support to the Boys' Evening Home. . . . Over one-half of the boys cared for are sons of our Russian and Polish co-religionists. . . ."²

Nevertheless, a group of spirited men from the settled Jewish community announced the establishment of a Young Men's Jewish Association in February, 1887. It was the founders' hope that the young men of the immigrant community would "break down the gates of the old Ghetto" and would "mingle with the world, as men among men." Their announced purpose was "to afford pleasant centrally located quarters in which to spend the evenings, read periodicals, social pastimes, and 'innocent games'; to establish classes for its own members for the reading of Standard English authors; also for the neglected Jewish poor."³

The Y.M.J.A., as the organization came to be called, rented a suite of four rooms in the Schaefer Block, corner of Central Avenue and Joiner Street.⁴ In a few weeks time large numbers of young people thronged the club's quarters. A gala entertainment was held at the new Osburn House on South St. Paul Street. Many people came; the organization was publicly launched. Young Jewish girls were invited to come to the Association to learn etiquette and sewing. The Zerubabel Lodge of B'nai B'rith offered the use

of its large library to the Y.M.J.A. But the library was not the major attraction for the young people. Apparently they were interested in playing whist and euchre and when the Board of Directors abolished card playing in the rooms of the Association, the organization seemed to vegetate.⁵ The rooms, moreover, were not suited for dancing and large entertainments. The young people lost their interest. That fall, the Y.M.J.A. acquired two more rooms in the Schaefer Block, hoping that the enlarged quarters would prove attractive to the young set. Billiards, checkers, and chess were added to the program of activities.⁶ For some months thereafter the organization prospered. Elementary classes for poor Jewish children were established. The officers of the Association, young sons of the older German-Jewish community, were attempting to make the Y.M.J.A. a social center for the entire community of young Jews. They offered their rooms, free of rent, to all of the smaller charitable and social clubs. They succeeded, in the spring of 1888, in convincing many of their elders of the worthwhileness of the project. Financial support was slow in coming, but in June they were ready to move to still larger quarters, having arranged to rent the home of Joseph W. Rosenthal, former police commissioner, on Clinton Place. In these quarters the program of activities was further enlarged to include classes in Hebrew for the children of the immigrants.⁷

Yet the leadership of the Y.M.J.A., for all of their good intentions, failed to understand the background of piety and religious sentiment which colored the lives of most of the young immigrant children. They planned to conduct the major activities of the Y.M.J.A. on Friday evenings. This became one of the chief causes of dissension. The children of Polish and Russian Jews, for the most part, objected to this practice. The youthful leadership of the Y.M.J.A. was adamant on this point, feeling that the Jewish Sabbath should be transferred to Sunday, in accordance with the general community practice. This was a strong source of friction and much antagonism was built up. Less than two years after its organization, the Y.M.J.A. was on the verge of disbanding. Ostensibly it was failing because of the lack of financial support, but the reasons were deeper seated. A newsletter writer, a Rochester correspondent of the European Hebrew periodical *Hazefirah*, summed

up the real reason for the failure of the Y.M.J.A. He wrote to the editor:

This club was originally organized for a good purpose. To bring together all the elements of the community and to teach young Jewish boys who sold charcoal, matches and newspapers in the streets, a knowledge of literature and language. . . . But soon I discovered that the program was not being carried out according to the European Jewish spirit and I finally left them. . . . There were many other members of this youth group who quickly opened their eyes and saw that salvation could not come from this Yankee spirit. So they left the club. . . .⁸

Thus, the Y.M.J.A., perhaps the first experiment in all of Rochester at settlement group work, was doomed to early failure. In a sense, the failure was the result of two conflicting definitions of Americanism. It was an ideological contest: cultural assimilation versus cultural differentiation.

The larger part of Russian-Polish youth began to move strictly in their own circles. Those who had left the Y.M.J.A. organized their own club and named it the Spinoza Literary Society. This new group rented quarters on Herman Street and soon attracted a large membership. They established a school which met evenings and Sunday afternoons and offered free instruction in English, German, mathematics, and history.⁹

Other Polish-Russian Jewish social organizations sprang up in succession. Two sewing societies were established. A group known as the Hebrew Dramatic and Benefit Society was organized and later incorporated. The young members joined together "to give dramatic exhibitions and entertainment for the benefit of needy persons of the Hebrew race."¹⁰ By this time there were even a few who, in the fashion of the East European *Haskalah* movement, organized a society for the preservation of the Hebrew language and culture. A certain Mr. Henshel (who Hebraized his name to Ben Ha-Shiloni) was joined by Jacob Hochstein and Solomon Schifrin in the formation of this organization. The group named itself the Hayyim Selig Slonimski society, in honor of the well-known European Hebraist, editor of the *Hazefirah* Hebrew magazine. Elias Ettenheimer, a prominent member of the German-Jewish community helped subsidize the rent for the "Slonimski House." There

the Hebrew enthusiasts set up a library of Hebrew books and periodicals.¹¹

Hebrew education until this time had been in the hands of private teachers. In the fall of 1889 a movement was launched to open a Hebrew school to be housed in the newly built Beth Hakneses Hachodesh on Chatham Street. The school continued to operate for some years as the Hebrew Free School. Despite the existence of the school, there was the constant complaint that not enough was taught. Many families preferred to have their children tutored by private teachers because the standards of the school were thought to be too low. By 1895 the Hebrew Free School had disbanded and three small, privately organized schools were opened. Of these, only the school opened by Nathan (Nissan) Kaufman on Kelly Street continued beyond the first year. In 1896 the Rochester Hebrew Religious School was incorporated and began its program on Chatham Street. Eight years later Kaufman combined his school with this institution. The school, after its reorganization in 1903, was to become the major center of Rochester Jewish education for several decades.¹²

While the elders of the Polish and Russian congregations were apparently concerned with the Jewish instruction of their children, they had little to offer the young people of high school and college age. Those young men and women who had received some religious instruction in their childhood were without any opportunities for formal Jewish education. Even as general education in the community for postelementary school children was still a rarity, so was Jewish instruction only a childhood opportunity. It remained for the young people themselves to take the initiative. The members of the small but interested group that gathered around Dr. Gannett at the Boys' Evening Home were now reaching their late teens. In 1895, they received permission from the authorities of Beth Israel Congregation to conduct their activities in the synagogue basement. They called their group the Judean Club. The boys were full of enthusiasm and were determined to develop a program of advanced Jewish and general knowledge. The older among them gave lectures in Jewish history, and as time went on they invited guest speakers to address them. Rabbi Joseph Hertz, of nearby Syracuse, often journeyed to Rochester to counsel and instruct them. Ap-

parently, for reasons obscure to us, the Beth Israel authorities soon saw fit to ask the group to leave the premises.¹³ Late that year the Judean Club moved to Blumberg's Hall on St. Joseph Street. The move proved successful; their activities expanded and their membership increased. In their new setting they were not attached to any specific congregation. A short time thereafter even a few young men of German-Jewish background joined the club. The club members began to solicit funds in 1898, and their successful campaign enabled them to rent a large house on St. Joseph Street. There they established a library, gymnasium, and a chess room. The group was blessed with devoted and intelligent leadership. The experience they had gained under Dr. Gannett's guidance at the Boys' Evening Home was invaluable. Louis Lipsky, Samuel Goldenson, Louis Witkofsky (Witt), and Meyer Jacobstein, who were active in the Boys' Evening Home, were joined by Lesser Kaufman, Lester Fisher, Henry Samuelsohn, Samuel Appelbaum, Haskell Marks, Moses W. Rubens, Benjamin Goldstein, and others in making the Judean Club the most important cultural forum in the Jewish community of that time. After the turn of the century, a Ladies Auxiliary was formed with Esther Weiss as the first president. The club moved to even larger quarters on Baden Street and was now able to sponsor a daily program. Outstanding lecturers were brought to their forum, including such personalities as Susan B. Anthony. Yet the strength of the Judean Club lay in the willing and enthusiastic participation of its own members in cultural undertakings. Discussions heard in their rooms ranged from biblical history to labor problems, Tammany Hall, and Henry George. The Judean Club was the direct forerunner of the Jewish Young Men's Association which was to be organized in 1908. As its members grew to adulthood they became the outstanding leaders of the Rochester Jewish community.

RELIEF AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

Large numbers of Russian and Polish Jews continued to arrive in Rochester after 1880. Most of them were in bad straits. Lacking knowledge of the language and having little or no money they soon engaged in rag peddling as their means of sustenance. A difficult lot it was! From house to house, from street corners to back alleys

they went. Their only contact with the English language reflected their plight. Most of them could only say one broken sentence in English: "Rags or paper, I pay penny a pound, scale is honest."¹⁴ By 1890 so many had come that even rag-peddling became too competitive. Many were left without any chance of self-support. Conditions were especially difficult in the freezing winter months. When sickness came there was no money to pay doctor bills. In 1887 a Hebrew Benevolent Society was established at the Beth Israel congregation and its members were mainly recruited from this, the oldest of the Orthodox congregations.¹⁵ Membership dues and public entertainments were the group's chief sources of revenue.¹⁶ But the work of this society seems to have met with indifference and little is heard about its activities after its founding. Another group was formed the next year, but its scope was limited. The Independent Hebrew Friends Association, as it was called, was organized "to care for its sick members and in case of the death of a member to pay or contribute toward his burial or funeral expenses." This group was of some help to the poverty-stricken, but it was not concerned with the entire Russian-Polish community; it was a membership organization. It remained for a newly married immigrant, Abraham Davidson, who had come to Rochester from New York city in 1887, to launch the first successful community-wide Orthodox Jewish relief society. Davidson's primary interest centered in the small children who came to the Hanover Street Hebrew School, tattered and practically barefoot. In 1893 he helped organize the Hebrew Charity Association.¹⁷ At first the Association's efforts were concentrated on furnishing clothing to poor Jewish children. Clothing collections for needy children were made week after week on Sundays. The synagogue pulpits were the principle means of mobilizing the community. To finance its program, the Hebrew Charity Association conducted raffles and sponsored public entertainments. At first the members met in Davidson's tailor shop on Vienna Street. Soon their increased numbers required the renting of a meeting house. Before long, the technique of a "five cents-a-week membership" was developed, and a paid collector was engaged to make the rounds throughout the community.

The practice of home visitations by women armed with baskets of food and sundries began as early as 1888. Late that year a Hebrew

Ladies Aid Society was organized. Scores of women met every month, raised money on their own, and performed a variety of anonymous charities.¹⁸ This group formed the nucleus of a group which came to be known as the Hebrew Ladies Relief Society.

Despite the fact that the German-Jewish community had a long history of organized relief work in the community, the Russian-Polish Jews felt the need to organize their own charitable enterprises. The United Jewish Charities, organized by Dr. Max Landsberg in 1882, continued to lend assistance to the immigrant Jewish families. Yet, the Orthodox community resented the "scientific" approach of the German-Jewish charity and its program of "efficiency." Moreover, the United Jewish Charities took especial pains to indoctrinate the immigrants in American standards and attitudes and doubtless, in the process, the recipient felt the patronizing hand of the donor. Thus after a few short years of residence in the community, some of the Russian and Polish Jews who had gained financial independence were determined to assist their own *lands-männer*. Competitiveness was bound to develop between the two overlapping charity systems. This was only a reflection of the sharp division between the two Jewish communities. To be sure, it was not a healthy situation. But it did produce at least one desirable result: the Russian and Polish newcomers were learning the ways of community responsibility. In this respect, the groundwork for a later day was being laid.

MANNERS, ATTITUDES, AND CUSTOMS

Despite the trying task of adjusting to a new and what often seemed horrible environment, the inner life of the growing Russian-Polish community had a color and glow all its own. There were some who felt unhappy here and constantly longed to return to Europe. Few, if any, did make the long journey home. For the most part the immigrants were young men. Some were married and had small children. They were eager to succeed, in spite of the many difficulties.

They were a synagogue-going group. Synagogue affairs were not without their bickerings and strife, yet public piety and religious observance were accepted and respected modes of behavior. Saturdays would find the handful of synagogues well filled. Mostly men

and boys were in attendance; women usually stayed at home to prepare the festive board. From time to time, guest cantors from metropolitan centers visited the city. An expectant and excited community eagerly awaited their arrival. Tickets of admission to the services were sold in advance to defray the fee charged by the visiting cantors. The spirit of the Sabbath day was visibly experienced in the city streets as fathers walked with their sons to the nearby synagogues.

The larger congregations conducted more than one daily morning service. In one synagogue morning or *Shaharit* services were held three times each day, at 6 A.M., 7 A.M., and 8 A.M. After 1885, when the immigration flow increased, many *minyanim* (small informal congregations) grew up. As the newer immigrants arrived, the pull of poverty brought them together and they huddled about each other, even for prayer. Small groups met for services in private rooms or tiny rented quarters. In several instances, large families established their own religious unit. Artisans and tradesmen banded together for religious worship; tailors and butchers maintained their own *minyanim*. On holidays and festival occasions Russian and Polish Jews who had settled in the surrounding towns would join their coreligionists at synagogue services.

The East European practice of nicknaming was soon transplanted in the Rochester community. Men became known as *Schwarze Selig* (black Selig), *Shloime der Ligner* (Solomon the Liar), *Wasserkopf* (Water-head) in derision or awe. The source of the compliment or gibe was usually something the man did habitually, a personality trait, his mien or complexion. To this day, adults living in the community barely remember the surnames of some of the early settlers; they recall only these nicknames which were so widespread that even children knew these men by no other names. The strange customs of the new land provoked the less adjustable among the newcomers and created many an incident that served as background for exaggerated anecdotes. Old-timers in the community still laugh loudly over the antics of some of the early Russian immigrants.¹⁹

Purim was a favorite time for public and private entertainment. Children were decked out in masks and costumes and prankish games were the order of the day. Blumberg's Hall, Arion Hall, and

Germania Hall were the favorite locations for Purim balls and benefit programs.²⁰ A Flower City Social Club, organized purely for purposes of entertainment, sponsored large parties. Only young people in their twenties participated in such activities. Those over thirty were usually married and married people did not join social clubs of this kind.

Weddings, also, were occasions of great festivity. The more affluent families reserved the Leopold Street Synagogue or the newly built Beth Hakneses Hachodesh for the marriage of their children. After the religious services members of the immediate family would leave for a wedding supper at the bride's residence. A larger group then joined the celebrants for dancing and entertainment at one of the hotels.²¹ The Genesee Park Hotel was a popular place for such celebrations. Most people, however, were still unable to afford such lavish arrangements and the favorite setting for weddings continued to be the residence of the bride. Only a small number of people were invited and those who came remained for the repast that followed. During this period "inter-marriages" of Russian-Polish Jews with members of the German-Jewish community were almost unheard of. When such marriages did take place they were the "talk of the town."²² Only rarely were cases of marriage out of the Jewish faith reported. When those occurred every effort was made to convert the non-Jewish partner to Judaism before the marriage ceremony was performed.²³

The community Hevra Kadisha was in charge of all funerals. No deviation from traditional ritual was permitted at the interment service. The funeral service was conducted from the home of the deceased. Members of the Hevra Kadisha came to the home, washed the corpse, layed it out on the floor over some straw matting, and then dressed it in a simple white shroud (*tachrichim*). The night before the funeral a pious man or woman sat at the side of the corpse and read portions of the Psalms. The remains were placed in a simple pine box and carried on a horse-drawn carriage to the cemetery. Many times family and friends of the deceased who were unable to hire a carriage accompanied the coffin to the cemetery on foot. This meant a trek of four to five miles.²⁴

Many pious Jews desired to go to Palestine so that they might be buried there. Probably only a few ventured to undertake so

costly and arduous a journey. We know, however, of at least one Rochester Jew who, in 1890, left his home and family to die in Jerusalem.²⁵ Only a sudden financial windfall, resulting from insurance money he received because of an accident, enabled him to make the voyage.

Palestine figured in the life of the Russian-Polish Jewish community in still other ways. For the *Sukkot* festival (Tabernacles) the *Lulav* and *Etrog* (palm branch and citron) grown in Palestine, were used in the home and synagogue. For Passover, Palestinian wine was sent to Rochester in casks. In 1889 twelve casks reached Rochester and the local press presented its readers with the following verbal picture:

The utmost care is taken in the handling of this wine. It was manufactured in Jerusalem from grapes grown on the hills surrounding the Holy City. In company with these rabbis, the consignees approached the sacred casks. After an invocation by Rabbi Levinson, a new rubber hose was demanded. Several glasses were drawn and passed around. Collector Martin tried the first sample and pronounced it equal to scotch whiskey and twice as strong. The consignee and the rabbis sipped the ruby fluid and rolled their eyes in ecstasy. Following this each cask was resealed, each rabbi attaching a separate seal. The duty amounted to \$423. The consignment is valued at \$1000.²⁶

Despite the fact that as a group the Russian-Polish Jews were still a submerged class in the community, they gradually evinced an interest in the civic life of Rochester. In the 1880s, there were a number of movements designed to improve the physical appearance of the city and to insure the safety of its inhabitants. While generally there was stubborn opposition to street improvement and other civic programs such as sewer construction, the new citizens of the Sixth Ward were invariably in favor of these measures. In 1890 in connection with the improvement of Chatham Street, it was reported that every Jew residing on that street had signed the petition asking for the rebuilding of that thoroughfare.²⁷ By the mid-eighties a few of the leaders of the immigrant community had become active in ward politics and at least one was an unsuccessful candidate for Constable of the Sixth Ward on the Democratic party.²⁸

Rarely was an immigrant Jew haled to court for violation of the

law. The immigrant was generally unfamiliar with the prevailing customs of the law court and on one occasion when a will was being probated, the press noted that the immigrant witnesses "Insisted upon being sworn with their hats on and by raising their right hands."²⁹

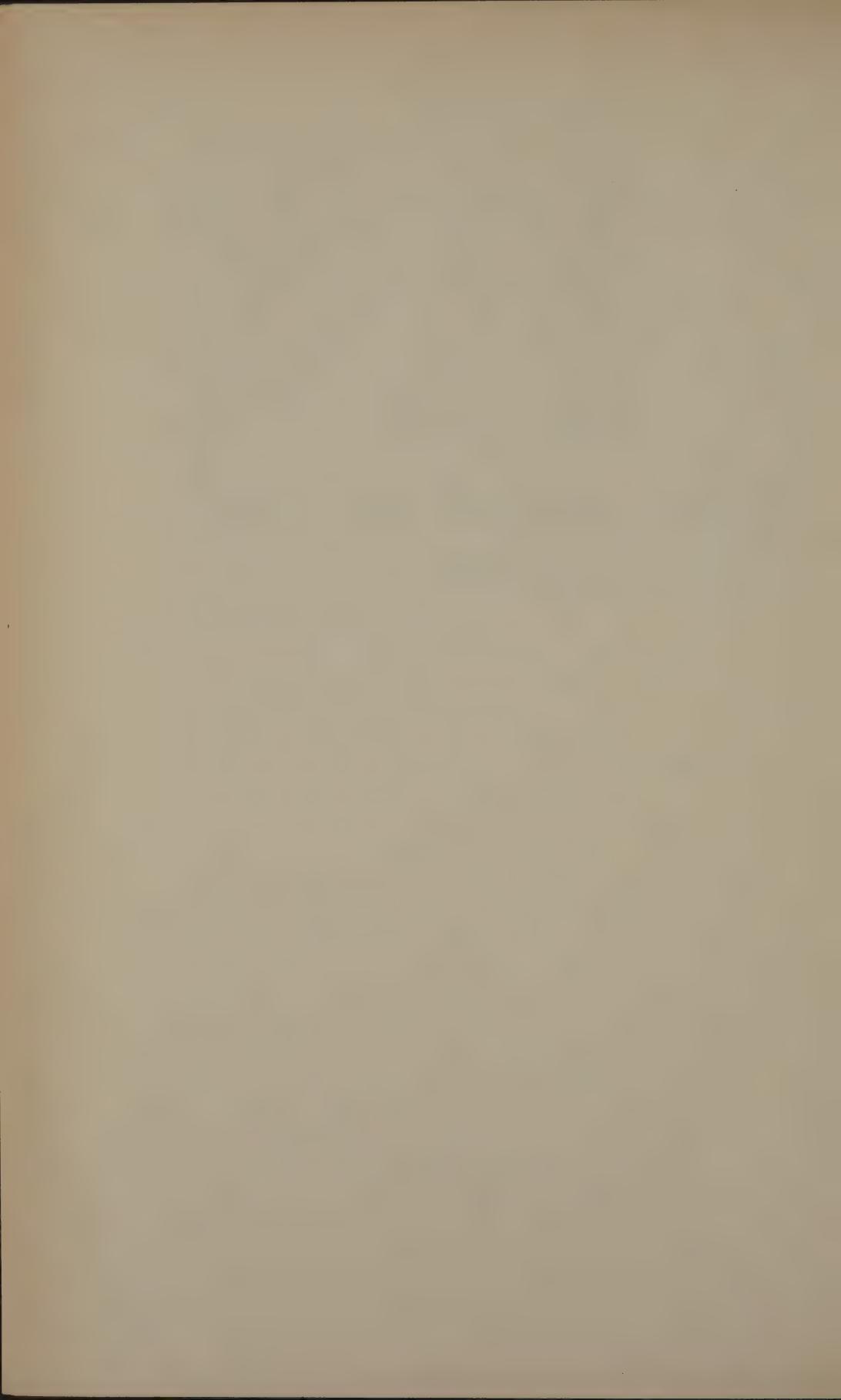
While for most immigrant Jews the natural center of Jewish life was the synagogue, a number of the newcomers became affiliated with the fast-growing national fraternal movement. A counterpart was needed to the German-Jewish dominated lodges such as B'nai B'rith, Free Sons of Israel, Order of B'rith Abraham, or Kesher Shel Barzel. One of the first national orders organized by the Russian-Polish group was the Independent Order Free Sons of Benjamin, established in New York city in 1879. In eight years more than 120 member lodges were organized, mostly in the eastern part of the country. A year after its national launching, a Rochester branch known as Simon Lodge No. 40, was organized. Members of the Nusbaum family, among the first Polish Jews in Rochester, were active in the lodge. Its purpose, like other similar groups, was to relieve distressed members, to offer cheap insurance, to provide sick and death benefits. In 1888, yearly dues were \$14.60, of which \$3.00 covered the initiation fee. It met at Charles Englert's Hall, at the corner of Andrews and Water streets.³⁰ Abraham Davidson had been one of the first members of the Independent Order B'rith Abraham when it was organized in New York city, in 1887. In 1894, after living in Rochester for seven years, Davidson succeeded in establishing a local lodge of the Order. At that time, the first trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus was rocking the world and the Rochester immigrant community was anxiously following the case. In honor of the French Jew, and as a mark of solidarity with the destiny of Jews everywhere, the group called their fraternity the Alfred Dreyfus Lodge. Members of the lodge continued to correspond with Captain Dreyfus' wife throughout his long and terrible ordeal.³¹ This soon became one of the most popular Jewish groups in the immigrant Jewish community. Dues were \$12 a year and insurance in the event of death amounted to \$500, in addition to \$75 for funeral expenses. At its peak, in the late nineties, the lodge boasted of over five hundred members. It then met monthly in an upstairs hall at the corner of St. Joseph and Nassau streets.

While the lodge was a symbol of social security to the security-conscious Jewish immigrant, its major impact in Jewish community life was to be felt years later, in quite another direction. Despite the central place still accorded the synagogues in the community of that day, the growing popularity of the fraternal order was the first of a series of decentralizing tendencies to invade the Jewish social structure. To be sure, there was a growing division in the synagogue life. This was caused by the mass immigration of people who preferred to organize cell-congregations rather than lose their own identity in the older, more entrenched synagogues. Nevertheless, in the eighties and nineties of the last century the major force and chief social preoccupation of the immigrant Jew was still "his" synagogue, if not *the* synagogue. The growth of the lodges and the separate Hebrew Charity Association, organized to counterbalance previously established German-Jewish institutions, stimulated the development of a centrifugal movement within the Orthodox community. The age of duplicate and multiple organization of Jewish life was about to commence.

PART THREE

The German-Jewish Community

1870–1900



TOWARD SYSTEMATIC REFORM

WHEN, in December, 1869, Berith Kodesh advertised for a rabbi "of advanced ideas and reformed religious views . . . able to deliver lectures in both the English and German languages" the signal was given for the opening of a new era in the Rochester Jewish community. At this time the congregation was divided by inner strife. It had been unwilling to take any decisive step toward systematic reform which might alienate its more traditional constituency. Now the day of the reformers had come! The congregation was willing to gamble on losing the "dissidents."

The "dissidents" were quick to respond to the challenge. Barely a few months had passed before they seceded from the parent group and organized a separate congregation of their own. Apparently two specific acts of the lay leadership of Berith Kodesh were the immediate and contributing causes for the schism. The first concerned the introduction of family pews into the synagogue, a step decided upon by the congregation at about the same time that the advertisement was inserted. Years before, when the Baptist Church was first purchased there had been opposition to placing the women's section on the same floor level with the men. Apparently time had not healed this wound; the traditionalists were never reconciled to this reform. When announcement was made, late in 1869, that family pews would be established, this more radical step served to alienate the minority even more. Then, in April of the following year, a "daring project" which shook the Jewish community in America and even had reverberations abroad seemed, for the traditionalists, to be "the last straw." Isaac Wile and Sol Wile, "anxious to break down the barriers which so strenuously separated our people from

the rest of the community undertook to procure and succeeded in procuring an invitation from our congregation (*Berith Kodesh*) to the Rev. Newton M. Mann, pastor of the Unitarian Society, to deliver a lecture or sermon at the *Berith Kodesh* Temple on some stated evening.¹ While this was to be Rochester's first interfaith meeting, and the forerunner of a long and virtually unbroken series of local interfaith meetings, still it was a distasteful act to the traditionalist group. That "daring" night the Temple was "crowded to its capacity by members of the congregation and their families as well as many non-Jews."² The project was a great success in the eyes of most of those present.

The die was now cast. The minority would no longer stand idly by as the congregation moved ever more swiftly toward radical reform. The handful of seceders found in Meyer Greentree a ready benefactor; he was prepared to pay for the erection of a synagogue building to house a new congregation. It is difficult to understand why Greentree should have been moved to join the ranks of the traditionalists. Not once was his name connected with the inner life of congregational affairs. He was not looked upon as an active worker in religious matters; indeed, he was married to a non-Jewess. While he is reputed to be the very first Jewish settler in Rochester, his name is not associated with the founding of the congregation, organized at a time when the Jews in Rochester could be numbered on the fingers of two hands. Perhaps it was just the fact that he was not looked upon as a leader of the *Berith Kodesh* congregation that made him want to be recognized elsewhere. In any event, in August, 1870, a synagogue erected with funds provided by Greentree was consecrated. Appropriately, the congregation called itself the *Elon Yerek* Congregation, which in flowery Hebrew was meant to stand for "Green Tree." The edifice stood on St. Joseph Street. Lavish ceremonies took place in which a young woman and two visiting rabbis took part. Greentree presided and David E. Mosely was elected vice-president.³ By October the congregation had gathered enough support to file for incorporation under the laws of the state. Greentree and Mosely were joined at that time by Julius M. Wile, Hirsch Britenstool, Simon Holtz, Joseph Mandel, Michael H. Lempert, and George Rosenberg, all of whom were leading citizens of the Jewish community.⁴ The name of the congregation

was still patterned after a Hebrew translation of Greentree, except that it now "improved" the translation and became known as Congregation Aitz Rah-Non [correctly Raanon]. A short time afterward the congregation selected Rabbi Victor Rundbacken as its spiritual leader. With a minister at its head, it could now hope to make progress and develop a continuing program.⁵

Very little is known about the inner development of Congregation Aitz Raanon. Even those who lived through those days in Rochester hardly remember its existence. From the sparse evidence at hand, we may note that from the beginning it was an unsuccessful attempt at formulating what has become known as Conservative Judaism. Rundbacken began a program based on the traditional approach. While for some unexplained reason family pews were used from the very beginning, the service itself was based upon the traditional prayer book. No organ accompanied the musical portions of the liturgy.⁶ After only three years, however, there was instituted a series of reforms paralleling the innovations of Berith Kodesh. In many respects the new, dissident congregation was not dissimilar to the parent which it recently had rejected.⁷

The story of the Aitz Raanon Congregation is crucial for a proper understanding of the Rochester Jewish community. It is also a commentary on the history of American Judaism. In the years immediately following the Civil War, Polish and East European Jews still were mightily outnumbered by the German and English Jews who had arrived several decades before them. Coming from centers of Jewish life where reform ideas were tantamount to outright apostasy, East Europeans could never conceive of tampering with the traditional ritual in order to adjust the patterns of observance to the new environment. This group, which came to America later, was shocked by the comprehensive integration of the German group into the American cultural mainstream. They could only react violently to German-Jewish deportment, not only in the areas of religion, but in all of the manifestations of their communal life.

On the other hand, there was still a group among the German and English Jews who felt that tradition should be treated with reverence, that radical changes could not be countenanced. This group, relatively small in number, was often powerless to assert its position. It could not join forces with the traditional East Europeans. The

gap that divided the western and eastern *weltanschauungen* made the barriers of language and culture seem broader. Only one way was open for the conservatives: to step forward boldly, on their own, as a middle group between the German radicals and the Polish traditionalists. In Rochester, after one abortive attempt in 1858, the conservatives took another step in 1870, when they founded Aitz Raanon. But they lacked precedent, pattern, and program. They suffered from the weakness born of small numbers and indecision. They were unsuccessful mainly because they were a generation too early. Ironically, when the historical moment for a movement of conservatives did arrive, years later, it was spurred not by German-Jewish dissidents from the Reform synagogue, but by the mass East European migration of the early twentieth century. Then, it was the East European dissidents from Orthodox congregations who successfully launched the movement.

While Aitz Raanon was busily engaged in beginning its own program, the parent congregation was still without a rabbi. Abraham Schmidt, who had come in 1860 to serve as cantor and reader, was still with the congregation, and when Dr. Guinzberg left in 1868, he was asked to serve as spiritual leader and was known as Rabbi Abraham Smith. But the leaders of the congregation knew that this arrangement could be only temporary. Joseph Wile, a founder of Berith Kodesh, made a trip to Europe in 1870. While abroad he consulted with one of the leading exponents of Reform, Dr. Abraham Geiger, and urged him to help the congregation procure a rabbi. Some months went by and nothing was heard. Early in 1871, a reply to this request was received from a Dr. Max Landsberg, accompanied by a fine recommendation from Dr. Geiger. The congregation elected Dr. Landsberg as their rabbi and awaited his arrival in March; he was to preach his first sermons on Passover.⁸

Landsberg had never before been rabbi of a congregation, although for five years prior to his coming to Rochester he had been *Stifstrabbiner* and teacher at the seminary for Jewish teachers at Hanover. He was born in 1845, the son of Meyer Landsberg, *Landrabbiner* at Hildesheim, Hanover. He was educated at the Hildesheim Gymnasium and at the universities of Göttingen and Breslau. His rabbinical degree was obtained from the Jewish Theo-

logical Seminary of Breslau. He had also received the Ph.D. degree from the University of Halle.

Fresh from his European journeys, Dr. Landsberg commenced what was to be a lifelong ministry in Rochester. His coming was a triumph for the Reform leadership of the congregation. Had he not been recommended by the well-known European reformer, Dr. Geiger himself! Not too much time elapsed before Landsberg, followed by the approving nods of his lay officials, began to introduce new reforms. One of the first tasks was to find a prayer book which would reflect the ritual position the congregation desired to espouse. Until this time, Isaac M. Wise's *Minhag Amerika* had been used by the congregation. It was now felt that the reforms contained in this ritual were too moderate. Dr. Landsberg, in the preface to his own prayer book, in 1884, described what occurred:

Over fifteen years ago the necessity had been recognized of changing the old order of worship so as to make it conform to the sentiments of the living generation and to render it intelligible and attractive to the young. But definite action was postponed by common consent until the services of a competent Rabbi should have been secured, by whose decision all declared themselves willing to abide.

A short time after I had entered into my present position (in the spring of 1871) I was sent by the congregation to New York, to attend the services at the leading temples and to select such ritual for introduction as would seem to me most appropriate for the wants of our people. I did not hesitate then to recommend that of Dr. Einhorn as the only one strictly adhering to the principles of progressive Judaism. . . .

The only reason why the Book was not introduced was that it was in German, unintelligible to some members of our congregation and to the majority of our young people. . . . One year later when Einhorn was translated into English, its introduction was resolved by the congregation. . . .⁹

Dr. Landsberg adds that "owing to the little satisfaction this translation gave, the action was soon reconsidered" and as a compromise measure, in 1874, the prayer book used at Temple Emanu-el in New York city was introduced. Actually, however, it was more than the unsatisfactory translation that proved disturbing. The Board action of April 27, 1873, approving the Einhorn prayer book was

challenged by a vocal minority. They felt that the *Olat Tamid* of Dr. Einhorn was too radical a prayer book to adopt.¹⁰ Here we have evidence of opposition which Landsberg, in retrospect, dismissed; despite the avid desire of the leadership to adopt a radical program in haste, there were still, in 1873, many members who desired to tread more slowly the path of Reform.

But the Reform party would not be stopped in its efforts to institute a program of radical change. The very next year the problem that had long vexed them, the removal of hats at divine worship, was partially resolved in their favor. It was decided that those who chose might doff their hats at temple services.¹¹ It did not take very long for this departure to bring about a further liberalization. Upon the instigation of David Rosenberg, a leading trustee, the Board of Trustees, in 1878, asked Dr. Landsberg to deliver a sermon on the question of head covering at worship.¹² A few months thereafter, when Rosenberg was about to be elected president, he promised to remove his hat when occupying his official seat on the pulpit. Such a practice was still unheard of, and when, upon election, Rosenberg kept his promise, another storm of protest broke out. But the reformers had their way.¹³ Scarcely four years later the secretary of the congregation was instructed by the temple trustees "to put up a notice for all visitors to attend divine services with uncovered heads."¹⁴ While members who so desired might continue to wear their hats at services, those who were not affiliated were carefully scrutinized and if they violated the new rule they were instructed to remove their hats.¹⁵

These were busy and exciting days for Berith Kodesh. Dr. Landsberg's arrival had helped to revive the waning interest of many members, and his intellectual leadership soon found a responsive following. By this time there was a greater interest in the young, American-born generation. Dr. Landsberg had reorganized the religious school and built upon the new foundations which Sol and Isaac Wile had erected two years before his coming.¹⁶ Soon, more than a hundred children and young people were coming each Saturday to Sabbath School, which was supervised by Dr. Landsberg and staffed by a group of volunteers from the adult congregation.¹⁷ The new constitution of 1874 contained the revealing provision (Article VIII) that the "business of this congregation at

its meetings shall be conducted in the English language. Also the books and records shall be kept in this language. But any person shall be permitted to speak in either the German or English language." ¹⁸ Apparently, while not all the members were yet able to master spoken English, they were anxious to identify the *congregation* with American society. Dr. Landsberg, too, followed this suggestion, and from that time on preached alternately in English and in German.¹⁹

The increased activities of the congregation and the revived interest created by its rabbi stimulated a movement for the erection of a new synagogue edifice. In August, 1876, the cornerstone for the new temple was laid at the corner of Andrews and North St. Paul streets. It was a festive ceremony. Moses Hays, president, was joined by Mayor Parsons and Dr. Landsberg in a line of march which terminated at the new site.²⁰ A month later the temple was completed and dedicated. At these ceremonies many non-Jews were also present. Dr. Landsberg, in his dedication sermon, summed up what was to become the chief purpose of his ministry and the great desire of his congregation in the next half-century. He explained that "the Jewish Temple has a new mission to fulfill. It is to dispel prejudice; non-Jewish brethren can come here and hear us pray and be surprised at how little difference there is between them."²¹

These were revealing words, reflecting the dominant spirit of the majority of Rochester's German-Jewish community. Their gaze was outwardly fixed; there was little concern about inner spiritual life as a personal experience. What mattered most were the similarities that existed amongst all religions. These German Jews were stubbornly determined to demonstrate this by stripping their own religion of all semblances of uniqueness and singularity. That such a leveling process could hardly be achieved in a city and country checkered by a great number of ethnic and religious variations they were apparently unaware.

Their policy of pruning the ritual was continued when, in 1882, at Dr. Landsberg's discretion the Bar Mitzvah ceremony for thirteen-year-old boys was dropped.²² The "more sensible custom of confirmation," it was felt, was the proper replacement for the outmoded ceremony of Bar Mitzvah.²³ The congregation was now a

member of the newly formed Union of American Hebrew Congregations and was forging far ahead in its program for radical reform.²⁴ A testimony of its strength and feeling of independence is indicated in a resolution adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 1, 1880, notifying "all Jews of the city and vicinity, who do not belong to any congregation, that hereafter all applications for religious services of whatever nature, will be refused except in the case of those who, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, are unable to belong to a congregation."²⁵ This resolution not only reflects self-confidence of the congregation but also points up the desire of the trustees to maintain the synagogue as the pivot of communal life. This decision may also have been a thrust particularly at those who were rapidly joining the fraternal lodges and neglecting synagogue affiliation.²⁶ It was also directed at Jews who lived in the towns adjacent to the city and who wanted the services of the congregation but had still failed to affiliate as members. We have no evidence to indicate how effectively this plan operated. In any event, it was a firm and forthright plan which was revolutionary for its day.

Membership in the temple was a costly matter. In the 1880s members of the congregation were paying, in addition to the initiation fee, as much as \$300 a year, if not more, for pew rent.²⁷ Membership entitled the family to free tuition for their children's Sabbath School, to ritual services, and to certain death benefits. The 1874 Constitution provided (Article XXIX) that "at the funeral of a member or his wife, the president shall order at the expense of the congregation a hearse and three carriages, and at that of the funeral of a member's child, a hearse and one carriage."²⁸ Members, as well as nonmembers, had to petition the Board of Trustees for permission to secure the rabbi's services at weddings or funerals. From time to time the custom varied, but by the mid-eighties a plan had been evolved whereby fees to the rabbi for these services were to be divided equally between the rabbi and the congregation. The fee to the nonmember, if his application was accepted, was fixed at not less than ten dollars. Of this sum, which was paid to the Board of Trustees, the rabbi received five dollars.²⁹

Despite the high cost of membership in Berith Kodesh, affiliations continued to increase through the eighties. It became neces-

sary for the trustees to announce "that there are scarcely enough seats for the members of the congregation; therefore no seats are for sale to 'transient worshippers' for the High Holidays,"³⁰ although worshipers on Friday evenings at the temple scarcely numbered more than fifty people.³¹ Dr. Landsberg's sermons, however, were frequently reprinted in full in the columns of the local press, and undoubtedly many more people read his sermons than heard them.

These printed reports of Dr. Landsberg's sermons sometimes proved embarrassing to the congregation. The *American Israelite* of Cincinnati and the *Jewish Messenger* of New York city often carried news and views sent them by Jewish residents of Rochester. Many writers quoted statements attributed to Dr. Landsberg. Often, the trustees noted, these and other journals carried "what we consider misquotations and misrepresentations of the lectures delivered by the Reverend Dr. Landsberg."³² These alleged misquotations were usually accompanied by barbed criticism of Landsberg's radicalism. The trustees decided to reply to these statements by forwarding a resolution to the *American Israelite* and the *Jewish Messenger*. They resolved that "the Board of Trustees of Berith Kodesh Congregation repeat in unmistakable words our heretofore expressed satisfaction of his [Landsberg's] great merits and worth as a scholar and as a teacher."³³ This occurred in January, 1883. The next twelve months, filled with important and crucial events in the history of the congregation provided a fierce but decisive test of radical reform and of the leadership of Dr. Landsberg.

The published resolution defending Dr. Landsberg reflected the tense atmosphere that enveloped the congregation that year. Landsberg was quoted frequently in statements bound to cause violent reactions. One can almost feel the anguish that must have been the result of his pronouncement that year on the question of intermarriage:

The rabbis of our church are somewhat divided upon this question [intermarriage]. For myself I can see no reason, from a religious standpoint, why a Hebrew cannot marry with a Christian. There may be objections from a practical standpoint, but those objections are exactly the same that may be advanced against Catholics and Protestants inter-

marrying. Such unions are not so apt to bring happy and contented homes, yet we see daily most pleasant and satisfactory results from such marriages.³⁴

The July ruling requiring all temple visitors to attend divine services with uncovered heads was still another contribution to the tension of those months.³⁵ In December, Landsberg announced the completion of his work on a new prayer book, which he had undertaken at the request of many members of the Board of Trustees. Reverend Newton Mann of the First Unitarian Society had collaborated with him in certain parts of the translation and also helped make the English "more idiomatic."³⁶ While a goodly number of the members were apparently indifferent to this announcement, a verbal battle developed among the fifty-five members who appeared at a congregational meeting held the next month to discuss the merits of the new ritual. The meeting attracted city-wide attention. The local *Democrat and Chronicle* felt it important enough to send a reporter to survey the reaction of large numbers of Jewish families. The newspaperman found that "only one in ten understand the language of Hebrew." This, he explained, was the reason for the apparent widespread indifference of the general Jewish community to the question.³⁷ Those who came to the meeting felt otherwise. The trustees had ordered this special meeting for the purpose of adopting Dr. Landsberg's radical Reform ritual. They had already approved the prayer book and now invited the membership to vote on it. Landsberg was busy propagandizing for the approval of the book. He gave a newspaper interview in which he boasted that "this is the first congregation to propose the change in ritual in this country." He predicted that the congregation would not lose a single member on account of the controversy then raging.³⁸ The trustees did their share of politicking, too. Skillfully, they had introduced the new prayer book, in pamphlet form, "for a period of trial." Ostensibly this was done to give the members an opportunity to study it.³⁹ The prayer book itself excluded all Hebrew, though it gave some Hebrew prayers in English characters.

In the course of the struggle over the new ritual Dr. Sigmund Mannheimer, who had served the congregation as reader, tendered his resignation. It was accepted. Dr. Mannheimer had been in

Rochester for some time and had also served as superintendent of the local Jewish Orphan Asylum. Apparently, he could not, in good conscience, go along with the radical reforms that seemed certain to be introduced. He left Rochester to join the faculty of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, where he died, in 1909, "after twenty-five years of conscientious and untiring service to the College."⁴⁰

On January 20, 1884, the fateful meeting was held. Both sides debated far into the night. Max L. Gutman, leader of the opposition, had, on several occasions, in adroit fashion, succeeded in forcing the tabling of a resolution approving the prayer book. Now, however, the vote was to be taken. Many who favored the resolution indicated that they did not want or need the new prayer book themselves but they believed that it would be good for their children. Some went as far as to say that it made little difference what language the congregation used in prayer. It mattered not, Sol Wise said, whether "the congregation prayed in English, Hebrew or Greek."⁴¹ Dr. Landsberg's protagonists held the line and won their fight. The vote indicated forty in favor and fifteen against the adoption of the resolution.

Whatever the feeling of the local Jewish community about the outcome of this struggle, the local press and the Jewish press outside of the city trumpeted the results far and wide. The voting tally, "forty to fifteen" was quoted in many periodicals with as much dramatic fervor as might accompany an important contest on the floor of the United States Senate.⁴² The editorial reaction of the national Jewish press to the ritual was uniformly negative. Even Wise's *American Israelite* joined the *American Hebrew*, the *Hebrew Standard*, and the *Jewish Messenger* in frowning upon the radical ritual developed by Dr. Landsberg. The *American Israelite* felt that while the new prayer book was progressive, it was not "Jewish in spirit."⁴³

With this success achieved, Landsberg was never again seriously challenged by his congregation on ritual questions. After the grueling battle of 1883, the congregation was safely established as one of the leading exponents of radical reform in the country. The last vestige of the pre-Civil War days was about to be discarded at this time, as well. It was not a religious question; rather, it was a prob-

lem of complete and final identification as Americans. This was the matter of the language of the sermon. Ten years had already passed since Dr. Landsberg established the custom of preaching alternately in German and in English. In 1883, he went a step further and began to preach in German only once a month or less. A year later he addressed a letter to the president and trustees requesting guidance on his future action. According to his contract he was, he wrote:

obliged to preach at every Sabbath and festival in either the English or German languages. The choice thus being left entirely to myself, I have from 1874 to 1883 preached alternately in English and German. Recognizing, however, that less German and more English was wanted by a majority of the congregation I began since November 1883 to preach in German only once a month, or even still less frequently. This procedure seems to have cause for dissatisfaction to some.

The trustees declared that the matter was to be left to the discretion of Dr. Landsberg. Apparently they were aware of the fact that he would increase his English-speaking activity by diminishing still further his addresses in the German language.⁴⁴ From then on, German was rarely heard in the pulpit of Berith Kodesh.⁴⁵

That same year proved to be decisive for the Aitz Raanon Congregation. The "Greentree Shul," as the group was known, had had great difficulty in maintaining its independent ritual position. As already noted, hardly three years had passed from the time of its founding in 1870 until it began to come under the influence of the astounding reforms advanced by the Berith Kodesh Congregation. Rabbi Rundbacken acquiesced in these changes, and as time went on there was barely any difference between the public worship practiced by the two congregations. In 1878, after serving for eight years, Rabbi Rundbacken left the declining congregation and was replaced by Rabbi Max S. Moll. Rabbi Moll came to Rochester from a congregation in Paterson, New Jersey, and assumed his new office in the fall of the year.⁴⁶ For three years Moll struggled to unite growing factions among his congregation, which was split into two camps. A dominant party was still unwilling to return to Berith Kodesh, but was moving toward an acceptance of the Reform attitude. A smaller group preferred a form of "modern Orthodoxy." In 1882, the congregation moved from St. Joseph

Street to a former church on Franklin Park. This move set the stage for the final break between the contending factions. A year later the tradition-minded group seceded from the congregation, and under the leadership of David E. Mosely organized a new society, Berith Oulom [correctly Olam]. They worshiped at the former Free Methodist Church at the corner of Atwater and Leopold streets. The parent group was determined to continue its activities. The members reorganized, following the secession, under the name of Etz Chayim Congregation and continued to worship at the Franklin Park synagogue.⁴⁷ In the midst of these difficulties Rabbi Moll offered his resignation.⁴⁸ Apparently this was done pending the decision over the split in the congregation. When the reorganization did take place, Moll was engaged by the Etz Chayim Congregation to serve as its rabbi.⁴⁹ It has been thought that the Etz Chayim Congregation was disbanded in 1886, when Rabbi Moll "determined to lead his dwindling flock back into Berith Kodesh."⁵⁰ Actually Moll severed his connection with Etz Chayim late in 1884. He was apparently frustrated by his experiences, and had no intention of returning to the ministry.⁵¹ He became a free agent and earned a livelihood by giving private lessons in German to adults. The congregation muddled on and began to lose its members to Berith Kodesh. The demand for dues which came to them late in 1887 from the secretary of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was refused, not so much because of lack of sympathy with the Reform position, but probably because of lack of funds.⁵² By the spring of the following year the synagogue building was already being remodeled into flats. The congregation was no longer.⁵³

In the meantime Moll had already accepted Berith Kodesh's invitation to serve as teacher and reader and to serve as assistant to Dr. Landsberg.⁵⁴ Thus, the congregation simply faded away, and its demise early in 1888 was not the result of any organized effort to wean its members back to the fold of Berith Kodesh. Actually, its own members had lost interest in it, while their rabbi, frustrated, had left them. It seemed that there was no room in Rochester for a strong movement of German and English Jews who could maintain a position independent of either radical Reform or East European Orthodoxy.

Little Berith Oulom [Olam] struggled to maintain such a middle

course. This handful of people who had seceded from Aitz Raanon in 1883 valiantly attempted to continue a program of "modern Orthodoxy," as David E. Mosely, their leader, liked to call it.⁵⁵ Probably as a symbolic act of faith in the possibility of their independent existence, Mosely purchased, in 1884, a small plot at Mt. Hope as a congregational cemetery.⁵⁶

Neither could the "Mosely Shul," as the group became known, continue to operate. It probably had disbanded by 1890, leaving the community with only one Reform congregation and several East European Orthodox congregations. Still, the idea of a third medium, distinct from these extremes, died hard. Elias Ettenheimer, an early German-Jewish settler and a benefactor of local Hebrew cultural undertakings, determined to organize a group, even if only a *minyan*, that would follow the precedent of the "Mosely Shul." For about two years Ettenheimer succeeded in conducting Sabbath services in the Odd Fellows Hall on North Clinton Street. Barely ten men would come, and these only on the personal insistence of Ettenheimer. Occasionally, when the religious quorum of ten men seemed difficult to obtain, Ettenheimer would ask two or three younger immigrants of the East European community to help round out their numbers.⁵⁷ By 1892, these religious services came to an end. Another movement for a ritual that was neither Orthodox nor Reform did not occur until the time of the First World War.

The failure of this movement locally may be traced in part to the espousal by the Aitz Raanon Congregation of a policy that mimicked the reforms at Berith Kodesh. When Aitz Raanon moved leftward, the forces of traditionalism within the German-Jewish community were left virtually powerless. As a result, Dr. Landsberg undoubtedly felt freer than ever to proceed with his program of radical reform. While he was unable to be present at the meeting which developed the "Pittsburgh Platform" in 1885, he rejoiced in the decisions it reached and announced that "the platform expresses my views exactly, and I have preached these views to my own congregation for the past fifteen years."⁵⁸ So he had, but not with the same confidence as in the years that followed the disbanding of the Aitz Raanon Congregation. The following year a sermon in which Dr. Landsberg advocated comprehensive changes in religious out-

look and observances was given great prominence in the local press.⁵⁹ The road ahead for Landsberg and his followers was cleared of every previous obstacle.

To the aid of this program, there appeared in 1887, a publication known as the *Jewish Tidings*. Two young men, Samuel M. Brickner and Louis Wiley, were determined to establish a weekly periodical of interest to Jewish readers in Rochester and elsewhere.⁶⁰ Brickner, intent on a medical career, was but twenty years old and a member of the senior class at the University of Rochester. Wiley, who was to make his mark on the Rochester *Post-Express* and who later became the business manager of the *New York Times*, was only eighteen years of age.⁶¹ From the start, the *Jewish Tidings* spoke out vigorously in behalf of radical reform and the need for complete adaptation to the American environment.

In its very first issue the editors made clear the general viewpoint of the paper. They announced that:

The tone of the Tidings will be progressive: it will take a decided stand on such questions as may come within its sphere to be discussed. It will advocate reform where it thinks reform will be of benefit; it will decry innovations where they seem productive of no good.⁶²

While the paper was exceedingly well edited, it seemed to thrive on controversial issues. Two years after its founding the editors boasted:

There isn't a Jewish paper in the country that hasn't within the past two years engaged in a discussion with the Tidings. These controversies have in the most part been conducted with good feeling and when they were not, it was not the fault of the Tidings.⁶³

There was hardly a Jewish home within the Rochester Reform community that did not receive the *Jewish Tidings* each week. A little more than a year after its launching the paper claimed the phenomenal weekly circulation of 5,500.⁶⁴ Correspondents from various Jewish centers often participated. Barely a week went by without the appearance of some articles by local university teachers or Christian ministers. The principal editorial themes of the paper were centered about a handful of ideas: the hope for greater patriotic interest; the need for increased facilities for youth programs; the denial of the existence of a Jewish nation or race; an-

tipathy, even hostility, toward Orthodox rites, attitudes, and rabbis. While these themes were repeated continually, none was as prominently featured and assiduously pursued as its program of changing the Jewish Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Over and over again they would repeat, "it matters little to a just and merciful God on what day His worshippers see fit to bow before him."⁶⁵ A great deal of hostility greeted this extreme view and in the course of a year the editors toned down their request. They now came out for "supplementary" Sunday services.⁶⁶ In 1890, they contacted leading American Jews from coast to coast asking their opinion of the projected Sunday morning "supplementary services." More than thirty-five outstanding rabbis and laymen responded. Opinion was equally divided for and against the paper's plan. Rabbi David Philipson of Cincinnati, Rabbi Joseph Silverman of New York city, and Louis Marshall of Syracuse were among those who favored the plan. In opposition to it, Simon Stern and Dr. Max Landsberg of Rochester were joined, among others, by Dr. Cyrus Adler of Baltimore and Moses A. Dropsie of Philadelphia.⁶⁷ The editors had indicated that "in order to reach the thousands of Jews who have neither the time or inclination to attend Saturday services, the *Tidings* proposed that supplementary services be held on Sunday."⁶⁸ Dr. Landsberg opposed this plan and presented an interesting statement explaining his position. He wrote:

This is a question which cannot be answered in a word. I need not say that I am in favor of holding services and giving religious instruction at any time and on any day when a sufficient number of people wish me to do so. But the question is now, whether I would advise to hold such services on Sunday supplementary to our regular Sabbath services. This must be decided with reference to the different local wants of the different places.

I am well aware of the great and deplorable lack of interest in the Jewish services on Saturday everywhere. This is one of the most serious problems for the Jews of the present day. But I am not prepared to admit that our services are poorly attended on Saturday, because it is difficult or impossible for many to spend one hour every Saturday at the Temple. I rather think that this is a symptom of the universal want of religious sentiment from which we are suffering. The complaint is made not only by the Jews; it is made by all denominations. Our gen-

eration is not a church-going generation. The attendance has fallen off everywhere, and I think supplementary Sunday services would not cure the evil, at least in *our* Jewish community. If all who could would attend our services, not only women and children, but men and young people also, our Temple would be filled to overflowing every Saturday. For the benefit of those who are really prevented from attending by conditions beyond their control, we have held supplementary Friday evening services ever since the year 1874. We have arranged these services so that they supply the wants of all who seek religious worship and instruction, and even have taken care not to let them interfere with theaters and other amusements; and what has been the consequence? Did all those who complain at the impossibility of attending rush to the Temple in order to avail themselves of this opportunity? The attendance at our Friday night services gives you a fair estimate of the number we should muster at a supplementary Sunday service.

Whatever, therefore, my opinion may be with regard to the introduction of this innovation elsewhere, in our midst I do not believe they would do away with the evils we are complaining of, and I would therefore advise to use all possible efforts to induce our people to attend the regular Sabbath services.⁶⁹

Despite Landsberg's rather practical approach, agitation in the congregation continued for the approval of the *Tidings'* plan. Yet, the congregation moved slowly. Undoubtedly, there was fear that even Sunday services would not attract a large attendance. It was five years before the trustees voted "that our minister be requested to prepare a series of lectures defining the development of the Jewish religion and explaining its position in the light of modern research, and that these lectures be delivered after the fall holidays on Sunday mornings."⁷⁰ The holidays came and went and still nothing was done to implement the resolution. Two years later the question came up again at a trustees' meeting. But still nothing was done.⁷¹ In the fall of 1898, Sunday lectures were inaugurated, but were suddenly dropped the following winter by Dr. Landsberg. Those trustees who desired to implement the program were openly critical of Dr. Landsberg for ignoring the wishes of the congregation and were "painfully surprised" by his action.⁷² Apparently Dr. Landsberg still held fast to his opposition view. Finally, in the winter of 1899, the proponents of Sunday services won their point. On November 25, the first organ service and lecture was held. Sun-

day services were to continue for many years without interruption.⁷³

While Landsberg disagreed with the *Jewish Tidings* on the Sunday services question, the two were usually in agreement with regard to other Jewish attitudes. Another favorite theme of the *Tidings* was echoed by Landsberg. At the 1890 convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis he was joint sponsor with Dr. David Philipson and Rabbi I. Moses of the following resolution:

This conference feels itself called upon to declare once more that there is no Jewish nation now, only a Jewish religious body, and in accordance with this fact, neither the name Hebrew or Israelite, but the universal application Jew is applicable to the adherents of Judaism today.⁷⁴

The resolution is reported to have lost. Yet, the impact of this viewpoint was strongly felt in Rochester at that time, and in many respects is still felt to this day. While other communities called their "Y's" the Young Men's Hebrew Association, in 1887, when such an organization was unsuccessfully introduced in Rochester, it became known as the Young Men's Jewish Association. Years later, when the movement was reintroduced, the local community center again chose to call itself, as it does to this day, the Jewish Young Men's Association.⁷⁵

In many respects the *Jewish Tidings* served as "house organ" for Berith Kodesh Congregation. News of the Rochester Jewish community was almost exclusively confined to the activities of the members of this group. Often it would refer to Berith Kodesh as "the congregation," as if there were no other Jewish congregations in the city. The *Tidings* was particularly useful in helping the trustees deal with the repeated requests that were made by various Jewish societies for free rental of the Temple's facilities. In fact, by 1891, the stream of such demands was so urgent and heavy that a special committee of the trustees was established to deal with the problem.⁷⁶ The quarters of the Temple, rebuilt in 1876, were being heavily taxed. There was also a recurrent complaint that the "noise from the transaction of business on North St. Paul Street where Berith Kodesh is located interferes with religious worship."⁷⁷ The whole neighborhood had changed by this time. Large wholesale

houses, factories, and commercial buildings surrounded the temple. On one side a saloon greeted those who entered the synagogue. Heavy wagons and all of the incidental noise of commercial enterprise made the location less and less desirable for religious use. The *Tidings*, sensitive to this question, began an editorial campaign in the winter of 1887 for the acquisition of a new site.⁷⁸ Week after week it pounded out the same theme. The pen of the editors proved a mighty force; the following fall the trustees announced the purchase of property at the corner of Grove Place and Gibbs Street for the sum of \$21,000.⁷⁹ For some time thereafter there were repeated rumors about the erection of a synagogue at the newly acquired site. Some were strongly opposed to any talk of erecting a new building. Many felt like Levi Adler who said, "I see no need of a new temple. People did not go to the old one."⁸⁰ Yet, the opinion was divided. Others felt, with Asher Beir, that "St. Paul Street is not the place for a house of worship. It is a business street."⁸¹ One of the major reasons for the prolonged delay was the problem of disposing of the temple on St. Paul Street at a suitable price. It was not until 1894, after ground had already been broken at the new site, that the St. Paul Street property was sold for \$16,000, presumably for factory purposes.⁸²

The dedication of the new building in June, 1894, was an event of great meaning for Rochester's Jewish community. Most of the principal speakers were non-Jews. Reverend Myron Adams and Reverend William C. Gannett, local ministers, were joined by Dr. David J. Hill, president of the University of Rochester, in offering dedicatory addresses. Guest rabbis included Dr. A. Guttman of Syracuse and Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, well-known Chicago reformer. This was a red-letter day for Berith Kodesh.⁸³

But the outstanding occasion in the congregation's life was yet to come. The semicentennial jubilee celebration in October, 1898, commemorating the founding of Berith Kodesh, was a most impressive moment in the history of the congregation. The synagogue was filled, American flags draped the walls, flowers were in abundant display. Above the altar, an emblem done in evergreen and white flowers carried the inscription "1848-1898." Three surviving charter members, Joseph Katz, Meyer Rothschild, and Gabriel Wile, were seated with Dr. Landsberg on the pulpit. The members

of the congregation, now numbering about 270 families, were touched by the beauty of the setting, the music, and the inspiring messages. Perhaps the most touching and the most encompassing remarks were made by Gabriel Wile, speaking for the founders:

. . . In our congregation the forms and ceremonies which had clustered around the altar of Judaism from time immemorial were observed with all the solemnity and reverence which sincere and pious hearts could command. We did not for many years realize that our tree had been planted in new soil, and our religion was to experience a new environment where Church and State were divorced, and it would take its place in the broad sunlight of free institutions side by side with other recognized religions. The element of Reform, of Progress, soon manifested, and as the years went by asserted itself.

What reforms after long struggles, what progress through trials and sufferings our congregation experienced in all these long years I will leave to more eloquent tongues to narrate. Many of us, and possibly I among them, believed in the form and clung to ceremonies; but as we look back over the long years and the long and devious paths that we have trodden during that time and observe what has been accomplished, we have come to realize *gam zeh l'tovo*—it was all for the best. The changeless, precious heritage of our fathers we have carefully guarded; to suit the times we have only changed its garb; dropped forms and ceremonies which concealed our treasure and passed to our children the priceless heritage of our holy religion. . . .⁸⁴

After fifty years Berith Kodesh had moved a long way from the course established by its founders. It had passed from traditionalism to moderate reform to radical liberalism. The Civil War, the expanding American industrial frontier, the growth of the clothing enterprise, the affluence of the local German-Jewish community, the seeds planted by Rabbis Mayer, Sarner, and Guinzberg, the heady convictions of Dr. Landsberg, the weakness of local traditional forces, the lack of a movement on the national level to counterbalance reform—all of these had a share in this process. Who can say, then, what was the cause of the momentous changes that had taken place, changes that reflected the ferment in Jewish as well as American life as the nineteenth century came to a close?

8

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

YEARS ago it was an exceptional thing for an American Jew to own land. Times have changed. The wealthy Jew of today invests his surplus money in real estate. . . .

. . . This is a happy condition. . . . It shows plainly that the Jew is no longer a wanderer on the face of the earth. . . .

. . . The Jewish men of wealth are not now peddlers and usurers as they were at one time supposed to be, but patriotic citizens with a care for the welfare of their country. In proportion to the population and wealth the Jews of this country contribute their full share to the tax roll of the state and the nation.¹

THE movement of German Jews to the southeastern part of the city was the immediate cause of this editorial in the *Jewish Tidings*. As the economic conditions of the wealthy clothing manufacturers improved in the years following the Civil War, a steady exodus from the older Jewish neighborhoods was begun. In the seventies, they moved from Chatham, Joiner, Oregon, and Nassau streets and other concentrated centers, to Franklin Park, North and South Street (present downtown Rochester), and as far south as South Union Street. But they did not long remain in their residences. Rapid mobility was a feature of the German-Jewish community of that day. By the mid-eighties the movement to the newer sections, near fashionable Arnold Park, Nichols Park (later known as Oxford Street), East Avenue, and North Goodman, became the vogue among the wealthier Jews. Simon Rosenblatt had built more than seventy fine homes in the Eighth Ward, at the eastern edge of the city, a few years before.² Dozens of "domestic palaces" were built in the late eighties by Jews who, for the first time, were moving

into neighborhoods occupied solely by wealthy non-Jews. At least a dozen mansions were being constructed by Jewish clothiers on exclusive East Avenue.³ Others who could not match the magnificent splendor of the East Avenue homes built equally beautiful but less expensive dwellings on the streets intersecting East Avenue, from Alexander Street southward toward Merriman Street.

The wealthier Jews were also in the habit of making trips abroad during the summer months. As early as 1862 some of the younger members of the families were sent to Germany and Switzerland for travel and study.⁴ Perhaps the first to do this was Rabbi Tuska's young son, who, as early as 1854, went to Europe to take up rabbinical studies. He has left us a remarkable picture of impressions in a series of letters that were published in Moore's *Rural New Yorker*.⁵ By the late eighties the society columns of the *Jewish Tidings* were filled with news of the arrivals and departures of Rochester's Jewish overseas tourists.⁶ Others vacationed at nearby Finger Lakes, Irondequoit Bay, or at resorts in the Catskill Mountains. Less frequent were travels to the western part of the United States, although some did go on combined "business and pleasure" journeys.⁷

As economic security is increased, time for leisure and recreation increases, too. Not only were the wealthy members of the German-Jewish community beginning to spend lavishly on vacation trips at home and abroad, but also they were desirous of providing local facilities which would enhance their enjoyment of life. We have already mentioned the organization of the Harmony Club, over a store on West Main Street, sometime before 1868.⁸ By April of that year, the club had increased its membership and was forced to move to larger quarters in the Sibley Block on "new Main Street." For five years the Harmony Club continued its activities at that location until dissension split the group into two. A Standard Club and a Progress Club were then organized. Before long, however, the two groups were reunited, and the Phoenix Club was organized. It was said that this name was given "probably because it, like the fabled bird, had risen from the ashes of the other club."⁹ For a time after its founding, the Phoenix Club occupied rented quarters in Washington Hall. Some months later, it moved into a new building on Clinton Street. This club, the first in

Rochester to welcome women as well as men, was well considered by the general community. A local newspaper, in a long discussion of its activities, never once mentioned that it was a Jewish Club. It added the comment that "Rochester has several institutions of this character but she can well afford to welcome another."¹⁰ More than sixty Jewish families were part of this thriving group. Some members of the club gained increased diversion and pleasure from the new Driving Park, built in 1874, at the northern extremity of the horsecar line.¹¹ The grandstand, capable of seating 6,000, was often a favorite meeting place on Thursday afternoons for many of the socially elite. These were the occasions when the Gentlemen's Driving Club conducted trotting races. A number of Jewish young men not only owned their own steeds but drove them as well.¹²

The Phoenix Club continued for about eight years, when some of its members decided to disband in favor of a more expanded program of activities. Accordingly, in December, 1881, several dozen men assembled with the purpose of organizing a new group which would provide a larger place "of resort for members and their families" and would permit them to engage in what they described as "social, literary, dramatic and scientific" activities.¹³ This new society was called the Eureka Club. At first its meetings were held in rented quarters in the Odd Fellows building on North Clinton Street, but these small quarters were quickly outgrown. Soon, thereafter, the Barton mansion on North Clinton Street was purchased and refitted at great expense for club purposes.¹⁴ In 1883, the combined value of the land and property was appraised at \$40,000.¹⁵ In the space of ten years the property alone had jumped in value, for the records show that in 1893 it was listed as being worth over \$100,000.¹⁶

In a few years the membership numbered over 125 families and the group was looked upon by all of Rochester as "one of the most sumptuous clubs in the country."¹⁷ A contemporary description of the physical facilities reveals that this was probably true.

The main building consists of a large hall on one side of which are handsome parlors beautifully furnished, and on the other is the reading room and library. Back of the reading room is a large cloakroom.

There is also on the ground floor of this building the bar-room,

large dining room and a fine kitchen. On the upper floors are the billiard and card rooms, and apartments for the steward. . . .

. . . In a special building is the finely-appointed ball room and it is no exaggeration to say that this is the best in Rochester. It is sixty feet long and eighty feet wide. At one end is a stage of twenty feet depth, containing a full set of scenery from a kitchen to a drawing room and from a prison to a garden scene. It is large enough for the production of first class dramatic entertainments. There are commodious dressing rooms connected with the stage.¹⁸

The Club became a popular dining place for members and guests. Meals were served at any time of day.¹⁹ For relaxation, members enjoyed cards, billiards, shooting in the gallery, or bowling on "the best alley in Rochester."²⁰ The Club became the social center for the wealthy German-Jewish community. Patriotic occasions were celebrated with full-dress balls and the Purim Bal Masque was an annual feature and attraction.²¹ Holding a wedding party at the Eureka Club assured its social prominence and success. Money was hardly an obstacle, as lavish receptions rivaled each other in magnificence and splendor. This was still a time, however, when most wedding ceremonies were conducted at the bride's home, or at the temple. Mr. Sichel, who had been caterer at the Club since its inception, left in 1887 to found his own private catering establishment. His remarkable reputation enabled him to draw a large number of receptions and parties to his parlors which he opened in Court Street.²²

The Club, however, was not without its critics. It was described as being "soulless and sinful." Apparently, its gala and merry entertainments excited the imagination of those who were unable to afford membership and caused some social discontent. The editors of the *Jewish Tidings* were quick to defend the Club, however. Making somewhat exaggerated claims they wrote that it "is the leading social institution of the Jews in Rochester. . . . It keeps the Jewish young man from the street and the saloon. The influence of the club is elevating, not degrading. . . ." They went on to describe the benefits the Club had brought to the community:

The Club has a well-stocked library which is put to good and frequent use. Its commodious hall is used for refining entertainments and brilliant weddings. The members of the Eureka Club are among the best

and most highly respected Jewish citizens of Rochester and they are among the foremost in every charitable undertaking and public enterprise.

Don't denounce the Eureka Club! With all its faults we love it still.²³

This was apparently the opinion of those who were members of the Club. Yet, there is evidence that in many sections of the German-Jewish community there was displeasure with the Club. Born partly of envy, partly the product of the increasing restriction placed on new affiliations, talk went on continuously of forming another club for Jewish residents of Rochester. It never materialized. The Eureka Club members made it clear that they thought "another Jewish club in Rochester was unnecessary."²⁴

While the Eureka Club was an important center of social activities, home life in the Jewish community of Germans and English was intense, closely knit, and characterized by Old World *gemütlichkeit*. Old-timers still recall the custom of having Friday evening dinners which served as weekly family reunions. Families that had lost many other traces of religious usage held fast to the traditional practice of festive Sabbath eve meals. Probably little ritual meaning surrounded the event, yet hardly a home in the community would dispense with this weekly assemblage of grandparents, parents, nephews, and nieces. Many homes displayed shelves lined with fine books in German and English. Musicales, in the mid-eighties, became a very popular form of home entertainment. Occasionally, matinee musicales were held for women guests only. This musical activity became so widespread a form of entertainment that a number of the younger set began to invite their friends to "junior musicales" at their homes.²⁵ The men joined in these activities but seemed to be more interested in their trotting races, card games, and bowling leagues.²⁶

The theater, however, was a source of interest to a large group of men, women, and young people in the German-Jewish community. Abram B. Wolff became manager of the Lyceum Theater shortly after its opening in 1888. This was to become Rochester's center of dramatic offerings for many years to come, and Wolff's management had much to do with its successful operation. The Academy of Music, that same year, was managed by another member of the community, H. R. Jacobs. The Jews of Rochester's Ger-

man community were recognized as valuable patrons of the theater, and the Lyceum and the Academy of Music were important centers of Jewish social life.²⁷

Some of the men were active in Rochester's German-American community. After 1870, the Germans began to outnumber the Irish. A signal of this fact was the introduction of German into the public schools after a long and heated controversy.²⁸ At the annual Turn Verein picnics Max Lowenthal was invariably called upon to deliver an address which was always literary and scholarly.²⁹ His flow of language was admired and his talks eagerly anticipated. Max Brickner, prominent business leader, was also actively associated with the German cultural organizations in the city.

Jewish interest in German culture continued, despite the process of Americanization, which was inevitable in a second-generation society. After leaving Aitz Raanon, Rabbi Max S. Moll had begun to give lessons in German reading, conversation, and grammar. He continued these private classes for several years thereafter. Moll rented quarters at Gibbs Street near East Main Street, in 1887, in order to accommodate his growing clientele. A number of Rochesterians, among them Jeremiah J. Hickey, studied German with Rabbi Moll before going on their pleasure trips abroad.³⁰ In addition to the general interest in the language created by the large German population in Rochester, there was a desire among a number of the older German-Jewish settlers that their children learn German. Before 1867 they were able to send their children to the Hebrew, German, and English Institute. Now, their children attended public school, and while German was introduced into the schools after 1872, they still felt the urgent desire to give their children a basic and intensive knowledge of the language they still loved.³¹

It was about this time, too, that interest in Jewish study was evinced by the adult community. Dr. Landsberg, spurred on by some of the young college men and a number of the ladies, organized a Bible Class in the fall of 1889.³² The interest in these Sunday evening study meetings was strongly kept alive by the devotion of a group of women, who apparently influenced their husbands to take part.³³ Women were about to be recognized as entities in their own right by the Berith Kodesh Board of Trustees.

A year before, three ladies of the congregation were appointed to serve as "honorary members of the school board."³⁴ There was a growing movement in the congregation that was directed toward admitting women into full membership, offering them the right to vote and hold office.³⁵

This was a time when women were becoming more active in congregational life of the larger metropolitan Reform communities. The Sisterhood of Personal Service of Temple Emanu-el in New York city was looked upon enviously by many women elsewhere. The *Jewish Tidings* began an editorial campaign in 1891, urging Berith Kodesh women to emulate the New York city example. In the interim, the Personal Service Sisterhood movement spread to Buffalo.³⁶ The idea finally took root in Rochester, and the following year the Sisterhood of Berith Kodesh was founded with Mrs. Minnie Wolff Elsner elected as first president.³⁷ The group, at the outset, organized a Sewing Circle which met regularly at the temple to help immigrant girls learn the art of home-making.

The Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, the year of the great World's Fair, numbered Mrs. Max Landsberg among its delegates. A handful of Jewish women attended this convocation and there the idea of forming the National Council of Jewish Women was conceived. Two years later, Mrs. Hannah Solomon and Sadie American came to Rochester to discuss their plan for the organization of a local branch of the national organization. A large and enthusiastic group of women were on hand. At that meeting the Rochester Section of the National Council was formed. Miss Josephine Shatz was elected president and an ambitious program was undertaken. The Section, at first, seemed to be almost a family group, since many of the members were relatives, children of the early German-Jewish settlers. The special interest of the Council soon found concrete expression. The influx of several hundreds of Russian-Jewish refugee families in the 1890s, suggested a specific type of work for these women. They were acutely interested in "Americanizing" the new immigrant. They were anxious that the Russian-Jewish women learn American standards of hygiene and housekeeping. A number of the Council members regularly visited the homes of immigrants to welcome them to the com-

munity. As time went on, their program of citizenship education became their chief activity.³⁸

The Jewish women of the Reform community were also identified with a number of social interests of a general community nature. Through the Sisterhood and the Rochester Section of the National Council they were beginning to work as a unit with other civic groups and institutions. They were looked upon as being among the leading community-minded groups in the city. While a few girls did attend occasional courses at the University of Rochester between 1875 and 1893, it was not until the end of the century that they were officially welcomed to higher education.³⁹ The Jewish women of Rochester were extremely active in helping to bring this about. In 1898, the University Board of Trustees voted that coeducation would be permitted at the University "when the women of Rochester shall raise the necessary funds for the use of the University, estimated at one hundred thousand dollars. . . ." By June, 1900, only \$40,000 had been raised. The trustees modified their earlier decision and requested that only \$10,000 more be raised. This sum was raised and in the fall of 1900, women were admitted to regular status at the University.⁴⁰ The entire issue was a challenge to the women of Rochester. Their liberalism, social consciousness, and community-mindedness were being tested. Those who worked strenuously on the fund-raising committees were looked upon as the community's leading spirits. A number of Jewish women of the Reform group were intensely active in this effort and consequently were widely admired by many Rochester residents. As soon as women were permitted to enroll, several Jewish young women registered in the first class. Mrs. Henrietta Seligman, who was especially active in the drive for funds, had the pleasure of enrolling her daughters, Miriam and Julia, among the small group of girls who began their studies at the University in 1900.⁴¹

A number of Jewish ladies were particularly active in the new women's organizations which were coming to the fore. In 1889 Mrs. Mary T. Gannett founded the Ethical Club. In the course of time, hundreds of women were attracted to the meetings of this group, at which the social and ethical problems of the day were intelligently discussed. This activity led to the establishment of a

local Woman's Educational and Industrial Union, modeled after similar unions in Boston, Buffalo, and elsewhere. Among the Jewish leaders in these efforts were Mrs. Max Landsberg and Mrs. Fannie Bigelow.⁴²

Still another project in which the women took keen interest was the vacation fund they started for children of Number 9 School on St. Joseph Street. By far the largest single group among the pupils then attending the school were the children of Russian and Polish origin. Coming from poor circumstances, they were hardly in a position to provide themselves with many of the pleasures of outdoor life. Reform Jewish women, in conjunction with the school authorities, arranged for school parties, picnics, and brief vacations for these children. The fund continued for many years and proved to be still another means through which these Jewish women established themselves as alert and concerned citizens of the Rochester community.⁴³

As the twentieth century approached, the Reform Jewish community had progressively integrated and absorbed American cultural norms. Their manners, customs, and social expressions were almost indistinguishable from those of their American neighbors. They were uniquely Rochesterian, as well. Intensely proud of their early local heritage, they came to look upon their community as a way of life, distinct and distinguished. Their Club was the "most sumptuous," their Temple the "most progressive," their homes "among the finest."

But the mass immigration that was yet to follow the first streams of Russian and Polish Jews would do much to change the life of this first generation American-Jewish community. This was still 1900. A sociologist viewing the future of Rochester's Reform Jews at that time might well have predicted their rapid absorption and, if non-Jews permitted, the ultimate loss of their collective identity.

9

CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS

NO ANALYSIS of the social habits of any group is complete without discovering the extent of its relationships with the other groups at its side. Such an investigation is particularly revealing when one deals with the Jewish group. Its "otherness" and perennial minority status have often combined to place insuperable obstacles in the path of a "two-way understanding" between itself and other groups. In Rochester, Jews seemed to find warmer and earlier acceptance than in many other localities. No doubt they were a strange lot in the early 1850s, almost unknown and little considered by many of their neighbors.¹ Yet the fortunate fact that their arrival in Rochester coincided with the coming of large numbers of other German immigrants brought them into closer contact with some of these non-Jewish *landsleute*.² Moreover, their favored economic position, brought about by the rise of the clothing industry during and after the Civil War, was still another reason for the cordial relations which existed between many Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors.

The first interfaith meeting known to have taken place has already been mentioned. The lecture by Reverend Newton Mann, minister of the First Unitarian Church, given at Berith Kodesh in 1870, paved the way for the future. Three years later, after Dr. Landsberg had established himself as rabbi of the congregation, Dr. Mann was again asked to speak at the temple. This time, however, he appeared as guest preacher. This was the first time that a non-Jew had preached a sermon at a synagogue service in Rochester.³ The following year the ministers of three congregations, Berith Kodesh, the First Unitarian Church, and the Universalist Church,

determined to unite their congregations on Thanksgiving Day at a special interfaith gathering. The service was held at the Universalist Church and large numbers of people attended. The local press devoted a great deal of space to the report of the event, a history-making occasion.⁴ Annually, thereafter, the three congregations continued this Thanksgiving tradition until the early 1890s, when the Plymouth Congregational Church was also invited to participate.⁵ Each of these occasions was gratifying to the members of Berith Kodesh and in a letter to Reverend William T. Brown, pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church, the trustees summed up their sentiments. Hailing the fact that Christian and Jewish ministers had exchanged pulpits with the approval of their respective congregations, they wrote Mr. Brown that "This is gratifying evidence of the tolerant and enlightened spirit which is the chief glory of our country."⁶

The harmony that had previously prevailed was interrupted the following year. This same minister, William T. Brown, since his arrival in Rochester in 1898, had aligned himself with the radical groups of the city. From the pulpit and in civic forums he made strong attacks on what he considered to be unscrupulous capitalistic abuses.⁷ Brown was very active in the newly formed Labor Lyceum and often used that platform to warn that the only route to international peace was through democracy, Socialism, and industrial brotherhood.⁸ He often invited leading socialists to address his congregation.⁹ He believed in the destruction of capitalism and was an ardent exponent of the need for direct political action.¹⁰ Naturally many of the members of his church took exception to his teachings; yet in a test of his popularity in 1900 the membership stood by him, reelecting him as their minister.¹¹

Apparently, however, the months that followed were difficult for both Mr. Brown and his congregation. Wrangling and dissension within the ranks made him an unpopular figure.¹² Reverend Brown undoubtedly spoke out fervently on one of the major social issues in Rochester. At this time the clothing industry was still divided by inner strife. A boycott, declared in 1896, by the American Federation of Labor against Rochester's clothing manufacturers, was still in effect. Brown could not avoid making his pro-labor sentiments heard on this vital issue.¹³

Mr. Brown, the Berith Kodesh trustees felt, had gone too far. The politically conservative trustees of Berith Kodesh considered his views to be "subversive of the existing social organization." Despite their strong desire to maintain the harmonious relations which had developed, they were unwilling to cooperate with anyone who might "taint" them with the brush of social and political radicalism. Proud of their own religious radicalism, they abhorred political nonconformity. Moreover, Brown was not only a "subversive" radical, he was attacking the clothing manufacturers. They therefore felt compelled to adopt this resolution in an attempt to define their position on the matter:

Whereas this congregation has for a number of years joined in Thanksgiving Services with the Unitarian, Universalist and Congregational Churches of this city, testifying to the fact that mutual respect exists and acknowledging that each organization in its way is working for the good of the community, it is with regret therefore that the Trustees of B'rith Kodesh have noted teachings on economic subjects of the present pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, the Rev. William T. Brown. Without doubting the sincerity of his beliefs, they cannot withhold the conviction that his utterances are distinctly at variance with the facts of life, and their teachings subversive of the existing social organization. This being the case, they do not consider it proper that the congregation of B'rith Kodesh be placed in a position of a quasi endorsement of theories they must hold harmful.

Therefore, be it resolved that B'rith Kodesh will no longer join in services where the cooperation of the Rev. William T. Brown is asked, and that our Rabbi, Dr. Max Landsberg, be advised of this action and be authorized to refer to it as the occasion arises.¹⁴

This resolution not only sets an important precedent in the history of interfaith meetings in Rochester, it also sheds light on the social attitudes of the B'rith Kodesh trustees. It is fairly safe to conclude that little social criticism directly affecting the *status quo* in Rochester's clothing factories would have been permitted Dr. Landsberg in his own pulpit.¹⁵ The labor-management struggle was still a vital concern to the large number of clothing manufacturers active in B'rith Kodesh. It is highly revealing that despite their strong efforts to work closely with Christian denominations, the element of economics overshadowed even this important con-

sideration. In spite of this incident, the cordial relations between the congregation and many of the city's churches continued, on the formal level, at least.¹⁶ When the new temple at Gibbs Street was dedicated, St. Peter's Church bells tolled out a special musical offering.¹⁷

The wealthier members of the Reform group made their presence felt in the various civic enterprises of the day. Apart from their important contributions to the commercial and industrial life of Rochester theirs was an impressive role in the financial and moral support of community charities, benevolences, and recreational facilities. In 1889, when a large undertaking for the Rochester City Hospital was begun, these families were among the important contributors.¹⁸ Liberal sums were offered by a number of well-known Jews in support of the Y.M.C.A. building.¹⁹ Jews were beginning to be elected to several important boards of directors of local social agencies, in the mid-eighties. Dr. Max Landsberg was a member of a number of these official groups. He was one of the incorporators of the respected Reynolds Library and remained a member of its Board for many years.²⁰ Together with his wife, Mrs. Simon Stern, and Mrs. Julius Wile, he served as a member of the Board of Managers of the Humane Society.²¹ While large numbers of Jews were not yet moving in these circles, it is significant to note that these designations were given not only to honor the individuals themselves but undoubtedly the entire Jewish community which they represented.

From the non-Jewish point of view some of the barriers seemed to be disappearing. In an interview with the editors of the *Jewish Tidings*, President Martin Anderson of the University of Rochester summed up what appeared to be a growing feeling:

I can see that in college, where Jew and Gentile in the same class associate as though there were no difference between them . . . indeed, I know of no single instance here, in college, in which a Jewish student has been made at all to feel any social separation between himself and others.²²

Yet, the question of religious separation was not completely understood or appreciated. A few liberal spirits may have agreed with President Anderson's statement regarding social adjustment. The

local clergy felt, however, that there was no reason for Jews to retain Judaism. To a man, the leading, most respected ministers wished nothing more for the Jews than that they be converted to Christianity. The editors of the *Tidings* naively asked a large group of prominent Protestant clergy to express their views on "the future of the Jews." The journalists apparently expected all the ministers to write what one did write: "I have seldom seen a Jew drunk on the street or seen one in jail or in an alms house. . . . I am led to believe there is a glorious future for these sons of Israel, socially, religiously and economically." But this same minister concluded in a vein which characterized the statements of all the others: "I regret that so many, both Jews and Gentiles, have rejected as their Saviour Jesus of Nazareth. . . . My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved." "The best future I could wish them," said another, "is that they could learn to know our dear Christ as theirs."²³ Apparently undaunted, the editors of the *Tidings* read the most unlikely meaning into these statements. Though some of the ministers were without bias regarding the social acceptance of Jews, each of them felt that Jewish religious separatism was uncalled for, and that, in any case, the only true religion was Christianity. The editorial which accompanied these statements, however, reveals the wishful thoughts of the editors:

The views expressed in the symposium are in the main liberal and brotherly. There is none of the prejudice of former times in the letters, and that *Jew and Gentile will meet on common religious ground* is to be the prevailing sentiment.²⁴

At about the same time, reports were circulating in the Jewish community that resorts in the Catskill Mountains were barring Jews. While the *Jewish Tidings* appeared skeptical of the truth of these claims, it nevertheless cautioned its readers to "go where you are welcome . . . keep away from those places where he [the Jew] is not wanted. . . ." ²⁵ It was not the province of the Jews to fight this intolerance or to cause discrimination to gain public notice, the editors felt. They advised that "there are so many empty headed and bigoted persons of leisure that some boarding houses think it profitable to cater to them by excluding Jews. Let them do it. Don't help them to advertise their business."²⁶ While they appar-

ently recognized the existence of anti-Semitic feelings, they saw no need for opposing this bigotry by any direct action on the part of Jews. This, it would seem, was a typical reaction of the period. The comfortably circumstanced German Jew was willing to overlook social discrimination. After all, he could withdraw into his own Jewish social club, where he was welcome. And yet, any tendency on the part of Rochester Jews to "form colonies and Jewish-quarters" was severely deprecated. Jewish leaders felt that "there is no earthly reason why they [Jews] should live in one ward or on one street. . . . Let us build no barriers of our own." They advised Jews to "live on different streets, in different sections of the city. Mingle with your Christian neighbors. This is a good way to hasten the decline of prejudice against the Jews."²⁷

The paradoxical elements of the problem were either ignored or not understood by them. If one were "not to go where he was not wanted" how could he avoid living in a "Jewish colony?" But life resolved the paradox. Some of the wealthier Jews did go into the newer sections of the city. The majority of them, when they finally moved out of the older "Jewish section," moved to what became known as the newer Jewish section.²⁸

While strenuous efforts were made to cultivate the tolerance of the non-Jew, and some advances had been made by individual Jews in gaining Christian acceptance, socially, Rochester's German-Jewish group was still a marginal community, dwelling on the fringes of the Gentile social world. Religiously, despite major attempts to unite at interfaith services and meetings, they were still looked upon as unreconstructed deviators from the true faith. In the six decades of their residence in Rochester they had moved much closer to the world of their neighbors. In some circles they were tolerated, in others accepted, in still others applauded. Yet, while they thought of themselves principally as Americans, their neighbors still thought of them principally as Jews.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

THE SOCIAL and religious changes that were taking place in Rochester's Jewish community can be explained by a variety of reasons. None, however, are as revealing as the economic position won by this group as a result of the Civil War. The clothing men of Rochester were rivaled in quantity only by those in New York city, Philadelphia, and Chicago. As the leading quality producers, they gained national recognition. Their traveling salesmen were moving about through the Midwest and the South. By the late eighties there were over two hundred traveling salesmen attached to Rochester clothing firms.¹

By 1870 the local clothing industry, largely controlled by Jews, had become so important in the economic life of the city that it employed a greater number of workers than any other Rochester enterprise. Yet the 1,416 tailors or "tailloresses" listed in the 1870 census, were among the lowest paid group of the city's workers. They lived in crowded dwellings or dormitories, where a great number of them performed their labors. This helps explain the fact that three fourths of the workers were women and girls. Moreover, it accounts for the discrepancies in the various enumerations of the workers employed, for the census figures do not include the large numbers who worked at home.²

The clothing manufacturers were in a position to make large profits on their relatively small investment. Little more than operating capital was required. Workshops were, for the most part, unnecessary or limited in number, since the immigrant tailors worked at home. The clothing "factories" were hardly that—they were small workrooms with scarcely more space than the room required

for cutting and storage. There the cloth was cut and bundled. All the pieces, including thread and buttons for six suits, were packed and made ready for delivery to the subcontractor. The subcontractor, or "boss tailor," was placed in full charge of completing the work. He employed, on his own, a large proportion of the home-working tailors. The thousands of Russian and Polish Jews who arrived in the eighties and nineties formed a large reservoir of skilled laborers willing to work at subsistence wages.

This excellent labor supply was in part responsible for the phenomenal growth of the local clothing industry in the 1880s. In addition, the more widespread introduction of the sewing machine after 1870, helped enlarge the output. Increased mechanization of the industry stimulated a trend toward the erection of large factory buildings. This meant that a greater investment in building and machines was now required of the manufacturers. Increased output enabled them to afford this, so that by 1890 it was reported that \$4,000,000 was locally invested in the industry. The number of firms increased, and subcontractors multiplied on all sides.³

At this time the city's northeastern sections were rapidly growing. The New York Central had eliminated its grade crossings. The dangers of the north-side section were thus reduced and a number of clothing factories joined the exodus from the older business section, eastward over the Main Street Bridge toward St. Paul Street. Michaels Stern and Company, L. Adler Brothers and Company, and Stein-Bloch and Company were among the many industrial concerns moving into newly erected factories on North St. Paul Street. When in 1889, Wile, Brickner, and Company moved to this location from Mill Street, North St. Paul Street became the mecca of the local clothing trade.⁴ The factories moved closer to the labor supply. But the wealthy owners of Rochester's twenty-five to thirty large clothing establishments began to move their residences southeastward.⁵ Thus, the eighties and nineties were times of great mobility in the Jewish community. There was a coming and going of factories, factory owners, and immigrant tailors. At the heart of all of this rapid movement was the highly successful clothing industry itself.

The success of the industry was also responsible for a number

of other changes in the city's industrial and civic life. As the largest employers of labor and as top-ranking national producers of quality clothing, the clothiers were beginning to gain recognition as leading industrialists. The local industry was not only attracting national attention, but also helping to develop associated commercial undertakings. The neckwear factory of H. C. Cohn and Company, organized in 1873, was now thriving. The button factories received a major impetus when Moses B. Shantz introduced the German process of making buttons from vegetable ivory imported from South America. Max Lowenthal, in 1873, obtained control of the Lamb machine, a Rochester invention. This knitting machine made mass production of knit goods possible. By 1890, the Lowenthal plant, using electric power, was able to produce woolen mittens, leggings, scarfs, and skirts amounting to 75,000 dozen a year.⁶

This financial success catapulted the clothiers and those engaged in allied trades into positions of economic trust in the community. They were no longer active only in their own industrial enterprises, but were beginning to play leading roles as members of important commercial boards of trustees of the city.⁷ Some were even elected as directors of local banks; others headed insurance companies.⁸ The "arrival" of the German-Jewish entrepreneur as a recognized leader of Rochester industry was about to take place.

As local industry developed, a group of men felt the need to emulate the example of other thriving industrial centers by organizing a Chamber of Commerce. Not the least important factor in its organization was the constant conflict between the laboring groups and the increasingly successful owners of Rochester's thriving factories. The workers wanted to share in this growth. Among the founders of the Chamber of Commerce were the German-Jewish clothing men who were anxious to protect the industrial interests of the city against the "encroachments" of the laboring forces. In the closing days of 1887, the first election of officers took place. Henry Michaels was chosen third vice-president and Isaac Wile was made a member of the Board of Managers.⁹ Other clothiers were also active from the organization's inception. It was not long before one of this group was asked to head the "Chamber." In 1892, Max Brickner was unanimously elected to the presidency.

While his election is reputed to have been the first such honor bestowed upon a Jew in America, it was hardly a surprise to the local community. The clothing trade was now "the largest and most important industry in Rochester, whether the amount of capital or number of hands employed be considered."¹⁰ Brickner's election was more than a personal tribute; it was a symbolic act of recognition, which draped the mantle of leadership about the city's dominant commercial enterprise. The German Jews of the city, almost without exception the leaders of the clothing industry, had now achieved more than wealth; they were Rochester's industrial captains.

While the clothing manufacturers had gained unrivaled prominence they were facing internal labor problems. The immigrant employees—cutters, trimmers, and tailors—were mostly Russian and Polish Jews. Many had come to Rochester primarily because of the opportunity to find immediate employment in the clothing factories. Despite the urgent need to retain their newly found jobs, in many cases, conditions of work were so poor and wages so low that they chafed under the bit of harsh managerial rule. A graphic glimpse of the hardships faced by these workers is found in Emma Goldman's autobiography, *Living My Life*. While her attitude was hardly unbiased, the anarchist leader vividly sketches a personal experience that must have been widely shared:

... late in December 1885, Helena and I had left St. Petersburg for Hamburg, there embarking on the steamer *Elbe* for the Promised Land.

Another sister had preceded us by a few years, had married, and was living in Rochester. Repeatedly she had written Helena to come to her, that she was lonely. But I could not support the thought of separation from the one who meant more to me than even my mother. . . .

... We travelled steerage, where the passengers were herded together like cattle. . . .

... The scenes in Castle Garden were appalling, the atmosphere charged with antagonism and harshness . . . The first day on American soil proved a violent shock . . . We had heard that Rochester was the "Flower City" of New York, but we arrived there on a bleak and cold January morning . . . Throughout the day people came in and out—relatives I had never known, friends of my sister and her husband, neighbours. All wanted to see us, to hear about the old country. They were Jews who had suffered much in Russia; some of them had even

been in pogroms. Life in the new country, they said, was hard; they were all still possessed by nostalgia for their home that had never been a home.

Among the visitors there were some who had prospered. One man boasted that his six children were all working, selling newspapers, shining shoes . . .

. . . When Helena and I retired to our room, we agreed that we must both go to work at once . . . Some days later Helena got a job retouching negatives, which had been her work in Russia. I found employment at Garson and Mayer's [sic], sewing ulsters ten and half hours a day, for two dollars and fifty cents a week.

I had worked in factories before, in St. Petersburg . . .

. . . Now I was in America, in the Flower City of the State of New York, in a model factory I was told. Certainly Garson's clothing works were a vast improvement on the glove factory on the Vassilevsky Ostrov. The rooms were large, bright, and airy. One had elbow space. There were none of those ill-smelling odors . . . Yet the work was harder, and the day, with only half an hour for lunch, seemed endless. The iron discipline forebade free movement (one could not even go to the toilet without permission), and the constant surveillance of the foreman weighed like stone on my heart. The end of each day found me sapped, with just enough energy to drag myself to my sister's home and crawl into bed. This continued with deadly monotony week after week . . . I decided to apply for a rise. I knew it was no use talking to the foreman and therefore I asked to see Mr. Garson..

I was ushered into a luxurious office. American Beauties were on the table. Often I had admired them in the flower shops, and once, unable to withstand the temptation, I had gone in to ask the price. They were one dollar and a half apiece—more than half of my week's earnings. The lovely vase in Mr. Garson's office held a great many of them.

I was not asked to sit down . . . "Well, what can I do for you?"

. . . I had come to ask for a rise, I told him. The two dollars and a half I was getting did not pay my board, let alone anything else, such as an occasional book or a theatre ticket for twenty-five cents. Mr. Garson replied that for a factory girl I had rather extravagant tastes, that all his "hands" were well satisfied, that they seemed to be getting along all right—that I, too, would have to manage or find work elsewhere. "If I raise your wages, I'll have to raise the others' as well and I can't afford that," he said. I decided to leave Garson's employ.

A few days later I secured a job at Rubinstein's factory at four dollars a week. It was a small shop, not far from where I lived. The house stood

in a garden, and only a dozen men and women were employed in the place. The Garson discipline and drive were missing.¹¹

But "all his hands" were apparently not satisfied. Early in 1882 a small group of clothing workers had banded together under the aegis of the Knights of Labor. The attempt at unionization was short-lived. A wildcat strike called by the union was not backed up by the Knights of Labor, and the embryo clothing workers union died. Ironically, the Knights were still unwilling to use the strike as a weapon.¹² Wages remained as low as before, and in 1888 the cutters and trimmers, now organized, brought pressure for a nine-hour day. Despite the fact that the weapon of the strike was not used, most of the clothing manufacturers granted this request. Stein-Bloch Company extended the nine-hour day to all employees, not only to cutters and trimmers.¹³ The Knights of Labor thus won an initial victory without any public disturbance. Their prestige was enhanced. Within a few months there were three local assemblies affiliated with the Knights' Cutters, Trimmers, and Tailors of America, with a membership of nearly 1,100. In August, 1890, this national organization of clothing workers held its fifth annual convention in Rochester. The successful meeting resulted in the establishment of still another local union; the lady tailors formed a unit and affiliated with the Knights. A few months later a fifth clothing "assembly" was formed. The Knights were jubilant over their success in the Rochester clothing industry.¹⁴

The air was filled with revolt. There was a general feeling of unrest among Rochester's laboring classes and one by one strikes had disrupted local industries. The foundrymen, the masons, the stone-cutters, the streetcar drivers, had all struck in the five years following 1885.¹⁵ The infant Chamber of Commerce had feebly tried to strike back.¹⁶ It had failed. Now the time had come for the clothing manufacturers to stand up in defense of their rights in order to "obtain freedom from unjust and unlawful practices."¹⁷ To all the other German-Russian Jewish antagonisms, there was now added an open tug-of-war: the immigrant Jewish worker was arrayed in battle against the wealthy Jewish manufacturer.

On December 1, 1890, it was announced that twenty-one clothing firms had incorporated as the Rochester Clothiers' Exchange. They were banding together, they said, to seek mutual protection, to

establish uniform practices and products, to work for the settlement of common differences, and to obtain freedom from unjust and unlawful practices.¹⁸ Sol Wile, prominent attorney, was the chief architect of the Exchange. In appreciation of his services, the organization named him its secretary and attorney. Henry Michaels was elected president and Joseph Cauffman, treasurer. Other officials of the Exchange included Abram Adler, Max Brickner, Bernard Rothschild, and Nathan Stein.¹⁹ While it declared, at the outset, that it contemplated no wage cuts and that it was not opposed to the organization of labor, the Exchange soon mustered its strength in an attempt to destroy the clothing "assemblies" of the Knights of Labor. The following year, early in March, the manufacturers announced a lockout. They would not permit, Sol Wile declared, union dictation regarding the firing of workers or the strict limitation of the number of apprentices each shop might employ.²⁰ After several weeks they sent a notice to the locked-out workers that they were ready to resume operations, employing all their former workmen except members of the Knights of Labor assemblies. Although a large number of local clothing workers were affiliated with the Knights, the national organization sent in its own lieutenants to manage the strategy of its counterattack. James Hughes, a stranger to the Rochester workers, was given the leadership of the union campaign. A combination of factors weakened the will of local unionists: fear of the loss of jobs, the need to search in other cities for new employment opportunities, the powerful combine of the producers, and the impractical, unrealistic approach of the Knights of Labor itself. To these one must also add the conservative sentiments which abounded among large numbers of the Russian-Jewish immigrant workers.²¹ The meetings of the State Board of Arbitration, which soon followed, upheld the hands of the manufacturers. The Knights of Labor was discredited. Wasting little time, the American Federation of Labor sent an organizer to Rochester. A short time later, Local 32 of the United Garment Workers of America was formed. There were repeated rumors that the Clothiers' Exchange had engineered this conflict between the unions. In spite of this accusation, the new union took root. The following year another A.F. of L. Local was established.²² From this time forward the clothing workers moved closer to the

camp of the American Federation of Labor. Nevertheless, not until years later when the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America was organized, were they able to balance the power wielded by the Clothiers' Exchange.

This struggle between the Knights of Labor and the Clothiers' Exchange lays bare the economic basis of the barriers that divided Jew from Jew in Rochester. It also provides us with pertinent information regarding the economic role of the Jewish manufacturers on the Rochester scene. The editors of the *Tidings*, in a passionate espousal of the owners' cause, indicate how this successful campaign of the Exchange influenced labor relations throughout the community. In a series of editorials they urged all employers to "refuse to be bullied":

. . . For a long time past, the clothing manufacturers in this city have been led around by the nose by their employees. They have finally come to realize what a humiliating spectacle they presented, and have turned at bay upon their pursuers. The employers now take the position that their rights are no less than those of the employees, and that as the latter may work for whom they please, the former may hire whom they please; and above all, the employers refuse to be bullied by a few irresponsible and criminal anarchists who make their headquarters in Chicago. . . .

. . . The clothing manufacturers of Rochester have taken a bold step in asserting their right to conduct their business without interference, but it is a step in which they will have the support of thinking men everywhere. . . .

. . . The *Tidings* congratulates them on their present stand. The degree of their success will be measured by their firmness and courage.²³

Calling upon the Rochester business world to awake to the evil of the Knights of Labor, and especially prodding the Chamber of Commerce into action, the editors caution:

. . . A press dispatch from Philadelphia of recent date says:

The Knights of Labor have issued a circular from headquarters, which reads in one part: "The clothing industry in Rochester must be destroyed. Knights of Labor do your duty." The circular calls upon every member of the order to boycott all clothing from the city.

Will the organized business men of Rochester permit such a blow to be struck at Rochester's prosperity, without rebuke? Surely the

gentlemen who are so zealous and energetic in the additional water supply agitation will not permit the occasion to pass by without, at least, adopting resolutions condemning the high-handed course of the boycotters. Gentlemen, do your duty! ²⁴

A few months after the successful culmination of this struggle, Max Brickner was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce. We have already indicated the symbolic nature of this act: the clothing industry was singled out as Rochester's major enterprise. We now can see the further import of his election. It was the Clothiers' Exchange, and Max Brickner was chairman of its Committee on Unjust and Unlawful Exactions, which had won a major victory for all of the business men of Rochester. The clothing industry had broken the back of labor's rebellion in the city and had rendered powerless the assemblies of the Knights of Labor. By the election of Max Brickner, in effect, the Exchange was being applauded by local industrialists for its victory over labor.²⁵

GERMAN JEWS IN THE PROFESSIONS

From the first day in the fall of 1900, when women were admitted to studies at the University of Rochester, Jewish young ladies have been among the students at the college. The active support of the coeducational idea given by Rochester's Jewish women was testimony to their interest in higher learning.²⁶ At least a half-dozen local Jewish girls enrolled in the first class.²⁷

The same enthusiasm for learning was evinced by the young men. Beginning with Simon Tuska, who entered the University of Rochester shortly after its founding, a number of Jewish boys attended that school. The university was small and limited, never numbering more than 200 students before the end of the century. After 1870, there were always a few local Jewish students attending.²⁸ But both the local Jewish leaders and the university administration constantly hoped that more Jewish young men would pursue their education at the Rochester college. Dr. Martin Anderson, president of the school, had recommended to the Jews of Rochester that they establish a scholarship for indigent Jewish students to help those who could not otherwise afford to continue their studies. He indicated that a sum of \$1,000 would yield a free scholarship for all time to Jewish students. A \$2,000 bequest would furnish

a student with books and clothing in addition to paying the cost of tuition.²⁹ Yet, despite a serious airing of this proposal, we have no record of its ever being acted upon.³⁰ Perhaps the Jews who were financially able to make such a scholarship possible were not attracted by the idea of making it available specifically for Jewish students.³¹

By 1890 the Jewish community was beginning to pride itself on the number of its young men that had entered or were preparing to enter the professions. While the larger number of men were entering a family business, especially if it was as lucrative an industry as the clothing trade, a few had already become lawyers and physicians, while others were preparing themselves as architects and chemists. Sol and Isaac Wile were admitted to the bar in 1874, after graduating from the University of Rochester, becoming, it is believed, the first Jews in New York state outside of Albany and New York city to achieve this distinction.³²

Henry Wile and Nathan Soble were the two Jews serving as physicians. Dr. Wile, a graduate of the local Free Academy and university, studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and in Vienna. Just before his early death in 1887, he had resigned his professorship in the Atlanta Medical College.³³ These two medical pioneers were followed by Dr. Simon Elsner, Dr. William D. Wolff, Dr. Moses Rosenberg, Dr. Samuel Brickner, and several others.³⁴ The custom of going "out-of-town" to college was already in partial vogue at this time. We have seen how a very few went to Europe to take up specialized studies. Here, in America, a number of Rochester's Jewish men were attending Harvard, Cornell, and Michigan, while a few girls took up their studies at Smith and Bryn Mawr colleges.³⁵

While some young Jewish people were gaining advanced education and entering the various professions, their number was still limited, indeed. To be sure, they admired and respected learning. However, the time had not yet come when the sons and daughters of Jewish families were expected to continue their higher education. It was still an age in Rochester's Jewish community, as in all America, for men to make their mark in business pursuits and for women to recede in their maturity to the less conspicuous arts of homemaking.

GERMAN JEWS IN POLITICS

"The suggestion by Dr. Felix Adler, President of the Ethical Culture Society of New York City, that the voters of Jewish faith in this city should combine and vote as a unit is not a good one. . . . For citizens of Jewish faith to bind themselves to one party will be the greatest mistake that could be made." Thus counseled the editor of the *Jewish Tidings*.³⁶

Jews in post-Civil War Rochester were, nevertheless, strongly identified with the party of Abraham Lincoln. Many of the entrepreneurs among them had grown wealthy in the prosperous days following the war, under Republican administrations. There was, as always, a tendency to identify their economic success with a political loyalty to the party in power. As already noted, the leading Jews were staunchly active in the cause of the Union during the war, and these early sentiments helped tie them to the party that had "saved the Union." Yet, these political activities were not undertaken as a group program. Never had the Jewish community, *qua* community, embarked on a program of political action, favoring one or the other of the parties.

On the other hand, because Jews lived in close proximity, and from the earliest days dwelled in large numbers in what was known as the Sixth Ward, they frequently voted a coreligionist into local office. Rochester's Common Council, the local governing body, almost always numbered a Jew among its members. Beginning in 1865, Jewish aldermen from the Sixth Ward sat on the Common Council for twenty-five years, with but a two-year interruption.³⁷ At the same time that Jewish men were elected aldermen, other Jews usually were elected to serve as members of the Board of Supervisors, representing the Sixth Ward. In the 1880s, Simon Hays served as president of the Common Council at the same time that Isaac Wile headed the Board of Education as its president.³⁸ The honor of being Rochester's first citizen had gone to William Guggenheimer as early as 1866, when after being elected alderman he served as president of the Common Council for one year.³⁹ Guggenheimer, interestingly enough, ran as a Democrat and defeated Joseph Beir, the staunch Republican incumbent! The Sixth Ward

was represented by the following Jewish men as aldermen: 1865–1866, Joseph Beir; 1867, William Guggenheimer; 1871–1874, Abram Stern; 1875–1879, Simon Hays; 1881, Abram Stern; 1883–1889, Elias Strouss; 1889–1894, Morris Lempert.⁴⁰ From 1884, until he left Rochester late in 1887, Joseph Rosenthal served as police commissioner.⁴¹ Under his stable leadership, which resulted in an unspotted record, the force was enlarged, the first police matron was appointed, a new jail was opened, and a police telegraph system was installed.⁴²

In addition to serving as aldermen, supervisors, and members of the Board of Education, Jews were often active in a variety of other public trusts. In the late 1880s, Gabriel Wile was made deputy collector of customs, David Hays was asked to serve as a member of the Rochester Board of Civil Service Examiners, and Joseph Cauffman was active as a member of the Park Commission and later its head.⁴³

The presidential election campaign of 1888 caused some sharp dissensions within the Jewish community. A number of leading citizens, among them Dr. Landsberg, although long affiliated with the Republican Party, spoke out strongly in favor of Cleveland's reelection. Landsberg had given out a public statement in which he had said: "I was a Republican up to four years ago when I voted for Mr. Cleveland. I will vote again for Mr. Cleveland and I am heartily in favor of his election."⁴⁴ Apparently the officers of the Orthodox Beth Israel Congregation were greatly disturbed by this statement, and sought to swing public support to the Republican candidate. Rallying under the banner of "no mixing religion with politics" they attacked Landsberg in the public press.⁴⁵ Word of the controversy spread to the national Jewish press.⁴⁶ In December, 1888, the heat of the election still not cooled, the *Jewish Tidings* commented:

The recent political campaign was one of the most bitter in the history of this country. Men's feelings were aroused as they were never before. In Rochester because a Jewish minister dared to place himself on the side of what he thought was right he was attacked by a certain class of Jews. . . .

. . . A minister is a citizen and every citizen has the right to make a speech to his fellow citizens in a political contest. . . .⁴⁷

Despite this division in Jewish ranks over the candidates, the defeat of Cleveland and the election of Benjamin Harrison were interpreted in some quarters as being brought about by the political activity of local Jews. The *Union and Advertiser* intimated that Jews had a hand in Harrison's victory. The unrest in Rochester, following the election, was long remembered and left its mark upon the community.⁴⁸ Jews continued to take part in local political affairs, but were cautious thereafter not to give the impression that they were identified with a single party. It was perhaps this unhappy turn of events, following the election of 1888, that strengthened the local feeling that "for citizens of Jewish faith to bind themselves to one party will be the greatest mistake that could be made."

11

PHILANTHROPY AND FRATERNITY

THE ORGANIZED Rochester Jewish community prior to 1870 had a single center. With few exceptions the source, sanction, and focus of all group activities was the synagogue—Berith Kodesh. But as the last thirty years of the nineteenth century approached one could discern the seeds of change, a tendency toward the development of a multicentered community. This shift was hardly noticeable. For the leadership of the emerging organizations remained in the very same hands as those already in control of the congregation. Yet, these years saw the formation of several Jewish organizations which stimulated the development of a centrifugal force. Their ultimate effect is still felt in the contemporary community. Although diverse in program, they shared a common motivation—the philanthropic impulse.

The first such undertaking had its beginning in the fall of 1877. A group of men and women gathered in October of that year to form the Jewish Orphan Asylum of Rochester. Apparently, a number of local needy Jewish orphans were discovered and to deal with the problem, the society was formed. Not long thereafter similar organizations came into being in neighboring Syracuse and Buffalo.¹ But there were not enough cases to warrant the construction of physical facilities to care for the orphaned children. The groups in Syracuse and Buffalo found themselves faced with a similar situation. In February, 1879, a group of men representing these three up-state cities met in the vestry rooms of Temple Berith Kodesh to discuss the possibility of consolidating their respective societies into a single organization. Four men from each of the cities constituted the entire conference. But they were important men, and

when they unanimously agreed to form the Jewish Orphan Asylum Association of western New York, they could look with confidence to a substantial following in their respective cities.² They also agreed to issue a call to the Jews of Albany and Troy to join the association, but apparently these communities were not interested.³

The organization was launched and steps were soon taken to incorporate the society.⁴ But a number of questions had still not been resolved. Although the group tried to work harmoniously, the idea of a regional organization was still so new that it had many problems. Strenuous objections were at first made to the proposal of combining the funds of the local societies. The first orphans to be cared for were two sisters from Buffalo and it had been temporarily decided that quarters would be found for them in Rochester.⁵ It was not until 1883, after heated debate and warm argument, that the group decided to locate the asylum permanently in Rochester, the central and most convenient point. Enough confidence had been engendered by this time to permit the consolidation of funds, too. The combined memberships now totaled more than five hundred people, and the amalgamated society, hopeful of continued support, purchased a building on North St. Paul Street and took possession in December, 1884.⁶ A superintendent and a matron were engaged. The large and roomy house facing the Genesee River gorge was on its way to becoming an important new focus of Jewish interest and attention in Rochester.⁷

Possession of this permanent dwelling with its playgrounds, gardens, and orchards stimulated a great interest in the work of the organization. Religious instruction was provided for the youthful residents; classes in Hebrew and Jewish customs and ceremonies were led by Rabbi Max Moll.⁸ The Berith Kodesh Congregation became actively interested in the progress of the orphans, since many of them were gradually brought into contact with its Sunday School. At the time of confirmation, the congregation often sponsored receptions at the Asylum in honor of the graduates.⁹ Meetings of the organization customarily took place in the "St. Paul Street Temple."¹⁰ The election of Dr. Landsberg as president of the group helped stimulate even greater interest in this work, among the members of his congregation.¹¹ Before long, as a result of the increased financial support, hospital and schoolroom additions were built.¹²

While a larger number of orphans were now accommodated in the enlarged quarters, there were never more than thirty-five to forty children in the orphanage at one time.¹³

The history of the orphanage in the years preceding the twentieth century reveals the beginnings of a new movement in the Jewish community. The earlier attempt to establish a Young Men's Jewish Association as a separate membership organization had been made when the community was not yet ready for a separately maintained center for recreation and the association had been short-lived. The orphanage, however, presented a different kind of challenge. Once established, it would hardly do to let it fail. Too much depended upon it: public relations, self-pride, the wish to dispense charity. As with all public and private social undertakings of this period, the accent was on the eleemosynary rather than the overall, communally useful institution.

The movement away from the congregation as the community's major Jewish center, begun in the period following the Civil War, is reflected in the development of the Rochester orphanage. However, the process was somewhat attenuated locally because of the "interlocking directorates" governing the two institutions. Nevertheless, the new interest in a continuing activity of importance, which appealed to the pride of the Jew, helped to dislodge the community's fixed focus upon the congregation as its principal Jewish concern. The time was soon coming when the interest in the synagogue, the parent of these new enterprises, would be reduced, in favor of the more urgent and immediate occupation with charity, welfare, and relief. These were the new undertakings that occupied the interest of the post-Civil War Jewish community.

It was in 1882 that a major step was taken toward the formation of an organized structure for local Jewish relief work. The Dime Society, which had been organized that year in an effort to "provide a better means for caring for the Russian Jewish refugees," did not get very far.¹⁴ The Hebrew Benevolent Society, organized in the earliest days of the local Jewish community, was unprepared, on its own, to care for the influx of the needy immigrants. The time was ripe for some united, city-wide effort that could meet the challenge created by the mass migration of Russian Jews to America. Accordingly, the Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Hebrew Ladies Benevo-

lent Society, and the Jewish Ladies Aid Hospital Society each appointed four of their members to act as a central relief committee. But the amalgamation was more than a structural or administrative union. It was also based on what its promoters called the principle of "scientific charity."¹⁵ Dr. Max Landsberg, some years later, described the purpose and scope of the newly formed organization of Jewish Charities:

Quite a number of Jewish charitable societies have long existed in our midst which did their work independently of each other and thereby impaired their own and the others' usefulness. After long and laborious efforts I succeeded in convincing our people how much better the work could be done if all societies would combine and, acting in concert, would dispense their charity in well considered and thoroughly organized fashion. Seven years ago it was resolved that such society should elect some of its members to act on a joint committee of the United Jewish charities of Rochester; that the individual societies should only furnish the funds and leave the use of the money entirely to the discretion of the committee. This committee, of which Mr. Leopold Garrison has been the chairman and its most active and efficient member ever since its organization, meets every week during the winter months and in summer once every month; examines into every case reported with great care; keeps a full account of the history of every individual or family assisted or for whom application has been made; renders liberal assistance where it is necessary; looks continually to the moral, intellectual and physical improvement of those who come under its influence and makes every effort to make them self-supporting.

We take especial pains to make newly arrived emigrants understand the benefits of American citizenship and of a free country; to induce them to give their children the benefit of a public school education; in a word, to elevate their standard of living. All help is given with the object of making those assisted, if possible, self-supporting. Therefore, often loans are given of considerable amounts. In many instances we have succeeded, and in some loans have even been repaid.

Finding that the amount received from the societies was not sufficient, we make in addition an annual collection which yields about \$1,500. The amount expended in the last year (1889) is about \$3,000. One excellent feature of our system is, that through it our Jewish brethren have been educated to the understanding of the beneficial working of such organized charity. They see how much more good than formerly can be accomplished at a much smaller expense. The superintendents

of the poor of both the county and city appreciate our efforts and we are under great obligations to both for the readiness with which they assist us and make our system more effective.¹⁶

Word of the apparent success of the newly formed United Jewish Charities spread throughout the state and echoes were even heard in non-Jewish circles. Nearby Jewish communities began to communicate with the organization for advice in forming similar societies in their cities.¹⁷ Laudatory articles appeared in the press, extolling the work of "scientific charity."¹⁸

Like the Orphan Asylum, the United Jewish Charities was completely identified with the leaders of the Berith Kodesh congregation. For a number of years Leopold Garson presided over both organizations simultaneously. The weekly meetings of the United Jewish Charities were held in the vestry rooms of the temple.¹⁹ The Charities' annual collection was taken up in the temple following a Friday evening service.²⁰

The society's expenditures for relief averaged about \$2,500 a year. In the late 1890s, when the influx of immigrants began to grow mightier, the relief provided came closer to \$5,000, but before 1900 it never went beyond that sum. Apparently it became the custom to publish a report of the annual collection, listing the names of the donors together with the amounts they contributed. The average gift was five or ten dollars; a very few gave fifty dollars. The highest gift reported was one hundred dollars.²¹ Relief was provided annually, on the average, to some fifty to one hundred families, involving from four to five hundred individuals. Assistance ranged from outright cash gifts to coal, clothing, medical treatment, board, rent, loans, and funeral expenses.²² In some cases, the applicants were either denied assistance or money was granted for transporting them to other cities.²³

Despite the success of "scientific charity," the work of the United Jewish Charities was not without its problems. On the one hand, the immigrants themselves were "dissatisfied with the scientific application of help which often is compelled to seem cruel in order to be kind."²⁴ On the other hand, the problem of poverty was complicated by what the German Jews considered infinitely worse: the ignorance of the immigrant children. The editor of the *Jewish Tidings* summed up the matter:

The public streets are thronged with newsboys and bootblacks, most of whom are unable to read or write, and their filthy appearance is a positive disgrace. Some of them are bright-looking fellows, who would undoubtedly make good citizens, were they given the benefit of any school training whatever. But they are permitted to grow up without getting the semblance of an education. Their parents deny them every opportunity of improving their condition by compelling them to work all day long and sometimes far into the night, so that they may earn a few cents.

Of course this condition of things results in vice and crime, and the only remedy lies in some provision for the education of these children. The Boy's Evening Home at the Unitarian Church is an excellent thing in its way, but it does not go far enough. No effort is made to educate the boys; the object appears only to amuse and refine them. A systematic and well-organized effort to instruct these boys, and a night school should be established for this purpose. The Assembly hall (of the Temple) could be utilized to excellent advantage in this undertaking. . . . The *Tidings* earnestly asks that something be done for these poor boys that men may be made of them.²⁵

Nothing was done immediately to answer this two-sided problem: the immigrant's rebellion against scientific charity and the inadequacy of philanthropy without an educational program. Yet in the very first years of the new century both questions were on their way toward solution. The immigrants were to found their own organized charity and a Jewish center was to be established. The seeds of these two developments can be perceived among the perplexities at the close of the nineteenth century.

The early tradition which saw local Jews taking part in the general civic welfare program was continued with increased activity in the post-Civil-War period. Sufferers from the Chicago fire in 1871, received relief from the local Jewish charities, as did later victims of calamities in Memphis, Shreveport, and Nebraska, in 1874.²⁶ The Johnstown flood, in 1889, brought forth a large number of contributions from local Jews through the Rochester Red Cross Society. Dr. Max Landsberg, who was president of the local Red Cross at the time, helped stimulate a great interest on the part of the Jewish community, and a great number of Jewish organizations and commercial groups contributed to the relief effort. The *Jewish Tidings* telegraphed the Mayor of Johnstown, asking: "Are

there any orphaned or unprotected Jewish children in Johnstown? Please give names and ages with view to adoption in families here."²⁷ Whenever catastrophe struck at home, local Jews were quick to respond with financial aid for relief purposes. A gigantic fire in 1888, maiming and killing scores of Rochesterians, brought forth a large group of Jewish contributors to the *Union and Advertiser* relief fund.²⁸ A special favorite of the local Jewish community was the Infants' Summer Hospital at Ontario Beach which it always generously supported.²⁹ It was with such activities in mind, no doubt, that a local newspaper, the *Democrat and Chronicle*, wrote: "Perhaps there is no other city on this continent in which those claiming this nationality have gained so high a position and merited so great a share of respect as have our Jewish fellow-citizens of Rochester."³⁰

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

The organized Jewish charity was a major development of the postwar Jewish community. It arose, as we have seen, from the need to respond to the challenge of mass immigration. Still another organized Jewish movement reached its peak in this period—the fraternal lodge was in great vogue.

To be sure, locally, the Zerubabel Lodge of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith had been organized before the close of the war. It was not until the early 1870s, however, that the fraternal movement made headway in the Rochester Jewish community. In 1872, a group of men banded together to form the Continental Lodge of the Independent Order, Free Sons of Israel.³¹ The grand lodge was one of the oldest and largest of all Jewish fraternal orders in the United States.³² After several months, the group was stable enough to purchase a plot for a cemetery at Mt. Hope.³³ The success of this group encouraged the formation of other lodges. Early in 1873, there was organized the Monroe Lodge, Kesher Shel Barzel. Some months later a second Kesher Shel Barzel Lodge was founded, the Flour City Lodge.³⁴ This lodge, with fewer members, was soon absorbed by the Monroe Lodge.

These lodges continued to thrive with the passing of the years. Like other social organizations, they were apparently composed of different economic groups. The B'nai B'rith, as the oldest of the

three lodges, attracted the earlier settlers, the more affluent and well known among the community. The younger men were attracted to the Continental Lodge, Free Sons of Israel, which was organized to be "the poor man's friend . . . his support in distress and affliction." Probably for this reason it alone, of the three German-Jewish fraternal orders in Rochester, found it expedient to purchase a cemetery plot for its members. The members of B'nai B'rith and Kesher Shel Barzel were undoubtedly better circumstanced. Most of them were affiliated with Temple Berith Kodesh and thus had no special need for a separate burial ground.³⁵

Despite the economic barriers that separated these men into three fraternal lodges, they all joined hands in helping to supplement the income of the United Jewish Charities.³⁶ Here, too, one sees the antecedents of the contemporary American Jewish community. While these men were beginning to split off into diverse fraternal associations, owing to their varying social and economic status, they were nevertheless able to unite behind the community-wide efforts of the organized, centralized Jewish charity. The wealthier Jews were members of *the temple, the club, and a lodge*. The less affluent were members only of *a lodge*; but both were active in the support of *the charity*.

EPILOGUE: THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

IT IS interesting to compare the structures of the Reform and the East European communities at the century's close. In both groups the congregation still played a prominent role, but the lodge and organized charity were moving into the center of communal attention. Paradoxically, the temple retained a more powerful social grip on its members than did the various Orthodox congregations, despite the fact that religious interest was much weaker in the German-Jewish community. Perhaps this was so because the Reform community was not divided into a variety of congregations. Despite all the abortive attempts at secession, Berith Kodesh managed to remain the single religious spokesman for the German-Jewish community. This could never be true of the East European groups, for they had brought to Rochester the religious and folk flavors of their various Old World communities. Thus, for the members of the East European community, the synagogue could never really serve as the central Jewish agency; there were so many different synagogues. When the lodge and the organized charity became part of the Jewish landscape, they could, in the Orthodox community, capture more interest than was offered the synagogue.

Moreover, as economic conditions required the union of clothing workers into a combined bargaining force, many tailors discovered that what leisure time they could find for social interests was spent among fellow Jewish workers. The trade-union movement, which was to flower after the opening of the twentieth century, was still another centrifugal force in the East European community. It was to move more Jewish interest away from religious

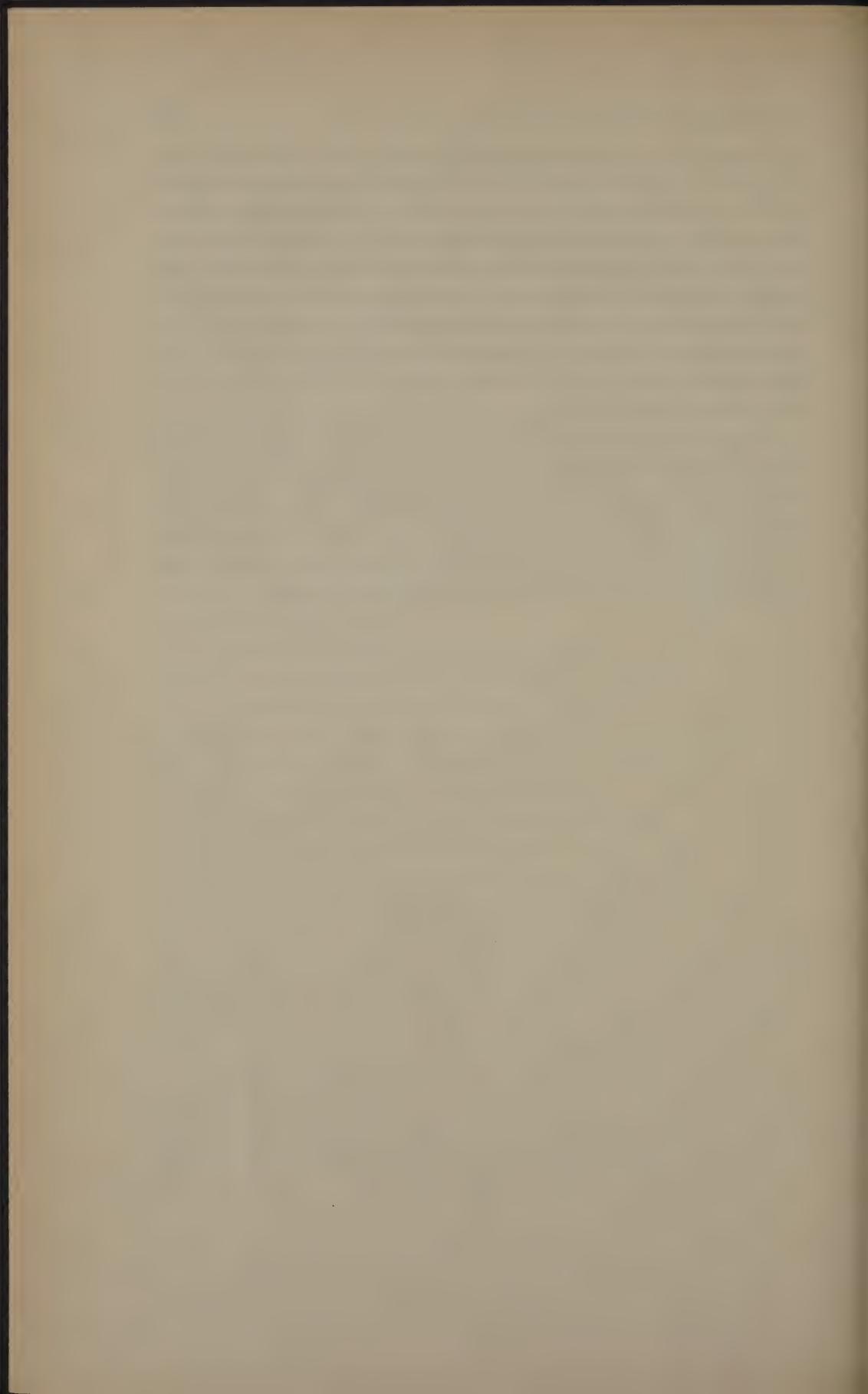
and philanthropic organizations toward the union, which was to become, in itself, a way of life.

A brief word must be added regarding the leadership of these two communities. In the Reform group, leadership was for the most part in the hands of a socially elite, economically homogeneous group. The manner in which the rabbi functioned is a good index to Reform leadership. Dr. Landsberg was not solely a preacher, but was looked upon as the spokesman of the Jews to the general Rochester community. Not only was he active in ritual and theological matters but he also served as a social engineer and as one of the architects of social policy. As a result, the congregation, through the symbol of his office, was identified not only with general civic issues, but with such new Jewish communal undertakings as the orphans home and the United Jewish Charities. Thus it was that the leadership of the congregation was also the leadership of virtually all German-Jewish community activities. Only the lodges challenged this leadership. Yet, even they were not strong enough to wrest the reins.

In the East European community we find an entirely different situation. Leadership here was diversified. To be sure, the oldest settlers clustered about the Beth Israel Congregation. But the newer congregations often challenged that group and independently went about their own affairs. The diverse national origins of the East European Jews, numbering among others, the Polish, Russian, Rumanian, and Galician groups, tended to stimulate the creation of a separate leadership for each national cluster. After the 1880s the conditions of poverty that existed among these newly arrived immigrants made them concentrate upon their economic problems and relegated their social energies to the background. This situation brought about a mobile kind of leadership. Until the immigrants could become self-supporting they could not think of social problems. Once they found some measure of stability, they began to think of the needs of the community, and the more aggressive of them rose through the ranks to the level of leadership. Here again the function and role of the Orthodox rabbis served as a mirror of the leadership within their community. These men were expected to be students of the law, judges and expounders of the tradition. They were not looked upon as representatives of the Jew-

ish community to the larger non-Jewish world. They were not clergymen, in the accepted sense of the word and consequently the rabbis of the Orthodox community could not be of much help in coordinating congregational and communal activities. Moreover, there was often more than one Orthodox rabbi and since each headed a different congregation, these rabbis were leaders only of their own groups. Thus, separate leadership groups grew up. Synagogues, lodges, schools, charities, all claimed their own coterie of leaders and followers. Divisiveness as well as diversity was inherent in such a social structure.

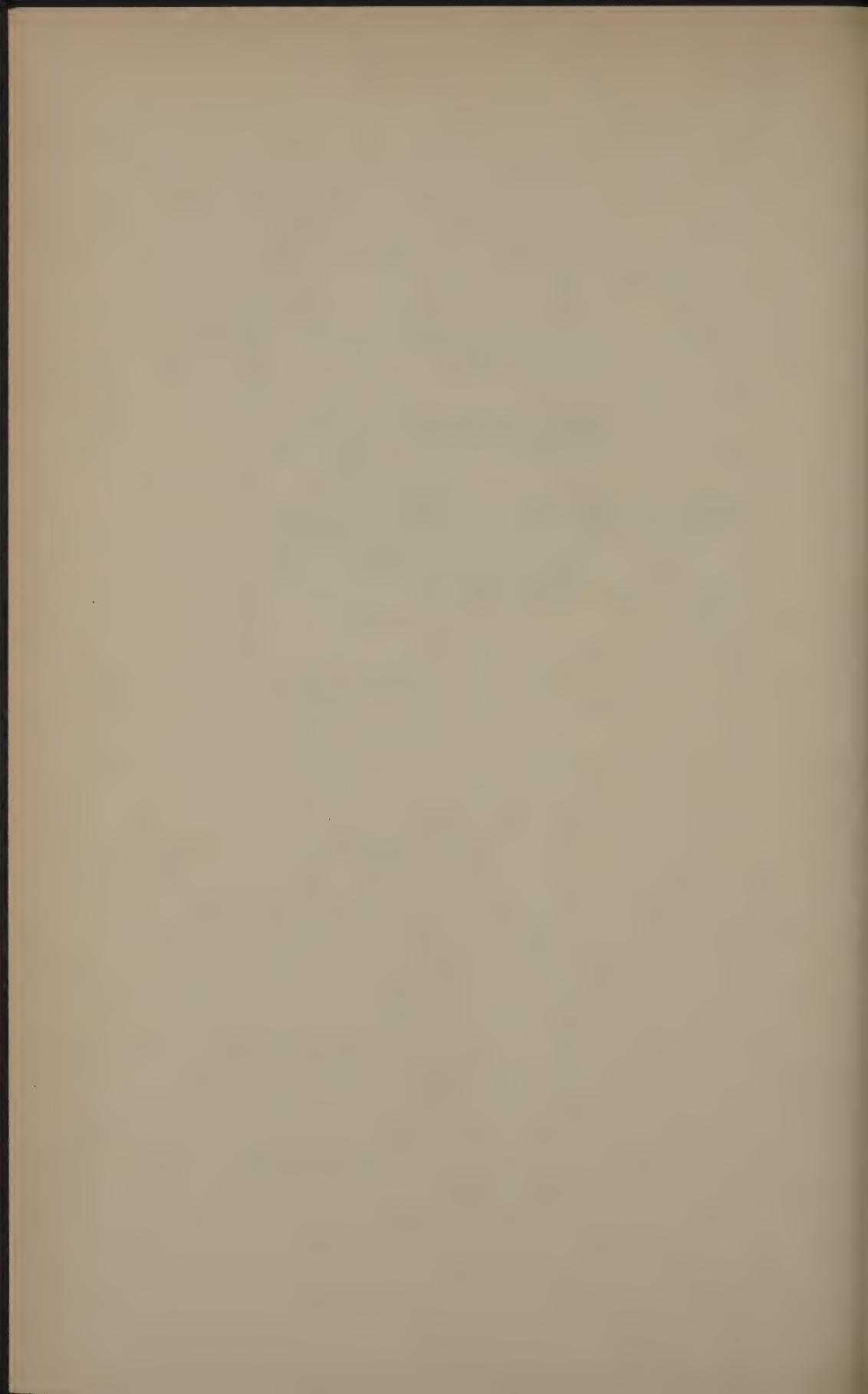
Thus as we approach the new century, we find the older foundations of Jewish community life slowly being replaced by a new social order. To a lesser degree among the German Jews, but perceptibly, nevertheless, the congregations of both communities were being surrounded on all sides by new and diverse societies. The total Jewish community was now less of a community than it had been before. It was a conglomeration of organizations.



PART FOUR

What the Years Wrought

1900–1925



POPULATION CHANGES

JULY 1, 1924, marked an important, virtually epochal moment in the history of Jews in America; an era had come to a close. On that day the "Immigration Act of 1924" became law. Three years earlier a temporary act had been passed, but prejudice against Southern and Eastern European immigrants was now written into law. Mass Jewish immigration to America was to become a thing of the past.

Jewish group settlement in America dates back to the year 1654, and Jews prior to the 1880s had developed a wide variety of community patterns. The mighty streams of East European immigration reshaped the direction of Jewish religious and cultural life. To be sure, the virtual transplantation of the East European Jewish community in America gave birth to many new problems for the settled Jewish group. Ways of Jewish life, previously recognized as the accepted norms of an integrated American Jewish community, were now challenged or supplanted by the engulfing East European migration.

The impact of numbers, already perceptible in the final two decades of the last century, is really the distinguishing characteristic of the first quarter of the twentieth century. It is estimated that before 1899 a half million Jews had entered the United States. In the thirty years that followed, four times that number came to these shores.¹ The geometric numerical expansion of these decades is without parallel in American Jewish experience and undoubtedly will not reappear on the pages of its future history. That is why a study of population statistics must precede any discussion of twentieth-century American Jewish history. The "astronomical" increase of the Jewish population is a basic common denominator

of most of the important aspects of Jewish life in the first decades of the century.

From the handful who made up the local population in 1850, the number of Jews jumped in five years to a total of fifty families.² In the course of the next twenty years it has been estimated that the number of Jews in the nation quadrupled.³ In Rochester this pattern developed even more strikingly. The largest bulk of the estimated 3,000 Jews who lived in Rochester in 1875 were of German origin. There was only a sprinkling of Polish Jews among them.⁴ In the years that followed, the flood of German immigration to Rochester began to dwindle and this decline is also reflected in the local Jewish community.⁵ From then on, the numerical growth of Rochester's Jewish community depended to a great extent on the new immigrant stream from Eastern Europe. By 1890 this Russian and Polish wave had brought up the total Jewish population of Rochester to an estimated 5,000.⁶

It may be estimated that approximately 1,000 Jews had come to Rochester from East Europe during the ten previous years. Thus, by 1890, of Rochester's 5,000 Jews 40 percent may be said to have been of East European origin.⁷ The next decade also brought large numbers of East European Jews to Rochester. By the turn of the century this group outnumbered the settled German-Jewish community. Of the estimated 7,000 Jews then residing in Rochester, four out of every seven probably were of East European extraction.⁸

By 1910, the decline in the local German-Jewish population, on the one hand, countered by a continuing onrush of East European immigrants, made this ratio even more one-sided. East European Jews in Rochester were now, far and away, numerically dominant. The 1910 United States *Census* indicates a total of 9,563 people who gave their mother tongue as Yiddish or Hebrew.⁹ Since most Jews from Western Europe, and particularly Germany, were not likely to list Yiddish or Hebrew as their mother tongue, this number is probably the closest we may reliably come in estimating the East European Jewish population for that year.¹⁰

It can be estimated that by 1910, there was, in all, a Jewish population in Rochester of about 11,000, with perhaps fewer than 2,000 of these coming from German-Jewish stock.¹¹ The increase in Rochester's Jewish population continued during the next decade,

so that by 1920 there were approximately 15,000 Jews. The numerical superiority of the East European Jewish community was thus further increased. Of the 15,000 Jews then in Rochester, some 2,000 were of German extraction, about 500 were Sephardic Jews, and the remainder were of East European origin.¹²

In 1922, the National Jewish Welfare Board estimated the total Jewish population of Rochester children (six to fourteen years of age) as 2,132. One estimates then that close to that number of children were born in Rochester to Jewish parents, during the years from 1910 to 1920. This survey also estimates the total Jewish population in 1922 to be 14,798. Since the German-Jewish population still remained static, these figures suggest that from 1910 to 1920 at least 1,500 East European Jews had come to Rochester. That this is a distinct possibility is further borne out by the 1920 *Census*, which indicates that 11,447 gave Yiddish or Hebrew as their mother tongue. This number represents a net gain of 1,884 over the 9,563 figure of the 1910 *Census*.¹³ The 1920 *Census* reports 3,435 people in Rochester whose mother tongue was Russian. If half of this number were in reality Jews, then it would again indicate that there were at least 12,500 to 13,000 East European Jews in Rochester.¹⁴

ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENTS

"THE DENSEST ward in Rochester is the seventh, which has 55 to the acre, and our most congested section is that which is bounded by Vose, Edward, Gilmore, Hudson, Rhine and Hanover Streets, where our people live at the rate of 77 to the acre."¹ A contemporary observer writing these comments in 1914 was in reality describing the Jewish district of Rochester. But this was equally true a dozen years earlier. Even then the area inhabited by East European Jews could be pictured in similar words. "It is a congested district," it was said, "with houses almost touching each other; frequently with shops in the rear, and almost no sunshine or breathing space. There are no tenements as in New York but the houses are one and one-half stories in which frequently three or four families reside."² Congestion and "ghetto" conditions had begun in the late 1890s and continued for many years. Huddled closely together, the new immigrants tended to become an island community, shut off from the rest of the population. They remained a rather homogeneous group until the early 1920s, when some of the immigrants began to move to better neighborhoods; they were replaced by Ukrainians, Italians, Syrians, and Negroes.³

Most of the immigrants found employment as tailors, cutters, trimmers, pressers, and spongers in the clothing factories. Working together as newcomers in the same industry bound them to a shared economic fate. While many of them worked for subcontractors, or "boss tailors," in stores or private flats, the greatest number of clothing workers were employed by three of the larger manufacturers.⁴ They worked long hours and received low pay. Small wonder that strikes were called periodically in order to improve their eco-

nomic position.⁵ The clothing workers were scattered throughout the 200 to 250 wholesale clothing shops and factories. Nevertheless, a strong group feeling was developing among them.⁶ Economic unrest made them partners in a common cause. The clothing industry was attacked from time to time by local social reformers because of its "sweatshops" with poor facilities—particularly bad were the shops located in the rear of subcontractor's houses.⁷ Not many employers were as farsighted as Mortimer Adler, who recognized that "we are absorbing a large foreign population that it is to our interest to conserve and develop." He called for a progressive program to meet the problems of the workingman, contending that:

The whole tendency of the times is to ameliorate social conditions, particularly that of the unskilled wage earner. The Workmen's Compensation Act has had your attention; an 8 hour day Act, laws for improved factory conditions, etc., are becoming visible above the horizon. Why should Rochester manufacturers wait for these things until forced to accept them. If they are fair and just should not our city be one to urge putting them on the statute books?⁸

Yet not even a year had elapsed before the clothing manufacturers and workers were ranged against each other in the great strike of 1913, the effects of which were many and lasting. Strikes such as this played an important part in creating a Jewish proletarian sentiment, which cut across the usually divisive lines of national origin or religious viewpoint. However, before recounting the details of the 1913 strike, in many ways a decisive one, we should examine the forces which played a significant role in fostering a more cohesive and better organized workingmen's community.

In the mid 1890s, a small group of Jewish tailors, numbering no more than twenty men, became active in the Socialist Labor Party. Even their fellow Jewish workers looked upon them as "wild creatures." They were unable to make any major inroads into the Jewish laboring community. In 1895, they did succeed in helping to establish a tailor's union, but it was short-lived. Its first and last public act was the calling of a strike. While several hundred Jewish tailors working for subcontractors did go out on strike, the German and Polish tailors remained at their jobs. For sixteen weeks these Jewish tailors struggled to achieve their two demands: a

fifty-five-hour week and weekly rather than monthly pay checks. The strike was lost and this new tailor's union was so thoroughly discredited that eighteen years passed before another tailor's union achieved any kind of success. Yet the effort was continued to equip the Jewish workingman with self-respect by means of a proletarian ideology. Sunday nights found a number of Jewish workers gathering together to listen to lectures. Over the months these forums gained in popularity until, in 1898, a split occurred in the ranks of the Socialist group. The Socialist Labor Party had divided and a number of Jews moved over to the Socialist Party. Disunity was great. "The pious had their synagogue, the non-religious had the saloon for poker or pinochle but the radicals had no movement," thus ran the lament of a contemporary Jewish Socialist. Personal animosities added to doctrinaire differences made it even more difficult to advance the cause of radicalism among the Jewish workers. A few diehards kept the fires of discussion burning in a barber shop at the corner of Baden Street and Joseph Avenue. In these informal meetings the hope for the launching of a Jewish radical movement was kept alive.

In the spring of 1903, twenty-three men organized a branch of the *Arbeiter Ring*, the Workmen's Circle, in order to propagate the Socialist ideal among Jewish workers. They actively sought out their fellow workers and brought prominent lecturers and authors to address their evening forums. It was significant that these gatherings were now held on Friday nights—the radicals had little concern for the Sabbath. Naturally, they were looked upon with suspicion and disdain by the Orthodox community. Socialist talk was radical talk and Friday night meetings were sacrilegious! But the pull of economic concern and the desire for financial improvement were strong attractions. Moreover, the Workmen's Circle forums enabled the newly arrived immigrant Jew to find a medium for easy self-expression. Lectures were in the Yiddish language and while most discussions were of political or economic significance, many were devoted to Yiddish literature and general Jewish cultural subjects. It was a customary sight to find upwards of two hundred people crowding the halls at these Friday evening forums. The "Progressive Library" established by the Workmen's Circle at the corner of Baden and Chatham streets attracted a wide and eager reading

public. Thus, as the months went by, a strong Socialist nucleus was developing among Rochester's Jewish workers. Many who came to listen or read remained to take a more active role in behalf of radical labor.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 also succeeded in solidifying sentiment among local Jewish workers. While the Rochester Jewish community reacted to these Russian developments principally in terms of the anti-Jewish pogroms which followed the Revolution, the radical elements among the Workmen's Circle took up the cause of the Russian revolt. In 1905, they helped to establish a Rochester branch of the Bund, the General Jewish Worker's Union, composed of Jewish revolutionaries from Russia. The Rochester Bund continued to meet for a number of years thereafter, and it forged ideological links with other Socialist groups among the German and Polish immigrants.⁹ In 1907 the Workmen's Circle gained further recognition as a result of its role in a local strike. In the spring of that year there occurred the first strike among Jewish bakery workers. Branch 27 of the Workmen's Circle organized the strike and helped engineer its strategy. The radical elements thus gained greater recognition among the general Yiddish-speaking community. For six months they operated a nonprofit cooperative bakery which lowered the prices of baked goods. The bakery owners, in the end, turned to the Workmen's Circle to settle the strike. The case for a local Jewish proletarian movement became strong and more magnetic.¹⁰

In January, 1913, the United Garment Worker's Union voted overwhelmingly to go out on strike.¹¹ The workers demanded recognition of the union, an eight-hour day, and 15 percent rise in pay. Manufacturers claimed that the average weekly pay was \$14.79 for men and \$9.05 for girls. Local newspapers, however, indicated that the general average was much lower. In addition, workers were anxious to reduce by two hours the fifty-four hour week which was then standard in the industry. But despite these grievances, the workers had been unsuccessful in the strikes of the previous decade.¹² Yet the efforts of the Socialist groups were now ready to bear fruit. Only a very strong class consciousness cutting across nationality and credal lines could make possible the solidarity the clothing workers displayed in this strike of 1913. Through the center

of the city mammoth parades were held. Thousands of clothing workers marched.¹³ Then, barely two weeks after the strike had begun, an incident of violence took place which welded the clothing workers even more strongly together. A teen-age girl, Ida Breiman, was shot to death by a "boss tailor!" The following day 2,000 strikers paraded in protest, and on the third day 5,000 clothing workers are said to have attended her funeral.¹⁴ The effect of the Breiman affair was so powerful that even a year later, on the first anniversary of her death, memorial meetings attracting thousands of clothing workers were held in the Jewish and Polish neighborhoods. Over 1,000 workers gathered in Kaplan Hall. There, speakers urged the workers to forget "race and creed differences in our struggle."¹⁵

This was now the key word in the worker's vocabulary: struggle. Because the workers conceived of this strike as a "struggle," a battle, they came under the influence of the proletarian movements, which were based fundamentally upon the concept of class war. The Workmen's Circle did everything possible to assist the strikers. They opened a grocery store where food was distributed free to families of the strikers. Members of the group were "taxed" heavily for this enterprise. Special "tag" days were arranged to obtain additional money from public collections. To be sure, the strike did not end in complete victory for the clothing workers. During the eight weeks of the fight it was estimated that three million dollars were lost to Rochester; one half of that amount was lost by the 11,000 people made idle by the strike.¹⁶ The mediation of the State Board of Arbitration was finally accepted. The manufacturers agreed to reduce the fifty-four-hour work week by two hours. While they refused a wage boost, they did agree to pay time and a half for overtime work. The employers also agreed not to discriminate against members of the United Garment Workers.¹⁷

Yet the strike had a lasting effect upon the workers; from this protracted collective action they gained confidence. Membership in the union had proved worthwhile. Help for their cause did come from various workingmen's organizations. And in the Jewish laboring community the prestige of such groups as the Workmen's Circle now rose considerably. For many Jewish workers it became a little easier to bear the shafts of hostility leveled at the radicals

by the pious members of the community. When, in 1918, the Workmen's Circle opened its school, the *Arbeiter Ring Shule*, a number of their children were able to receive a supplementary education of a dual nature: instruction in Yiddish language and literature and a socialistic philosophy of life. The school even attracted many children from homes of middle-class parents. Yet a new element had now made its inroad into Jewish education. The primacy of religion gave way to the demands of secular life. In the words of a historian of modern Jewish life: "Economic improvement, civic freedom, national cultural rights: these were the demands that were presented in the Yiddish language."¹⁸

Economics, too, helped supply the Jewish clothing workers with a political loyalty. Many of them made their political voices heard through the medium of the Socialist Party. Beginning in 1910, and continuing for a number of years, Jewish workers were nominated for local office on this party's ticket, in the Seventh and Eighth wards.¹⁹ In the election of 1917, influenced, it is said, by the pacifist sentiment of the time, a large Socialist vote carried many Socialists into office. In New York city, eleven state assemblymen and five aldermen were elected by that party. In Rochester three wards went Socialist. The Seventeenth and Eighteenth wards, with their large German population, protested the war activity by electing Socialists. The Eighth Ward, heavily populated by Jewish clothing workers, elected three Jewish members of the Socialist ticket: Charles Messinger as Alderman, Jacob J. Levin as Supervisor, and Samuel Kurlansky as Constable.²⁰ In this Eighth Ward victory, the Workmen's Circle had a great share. It was extremely active in the election campaign and organized a number of special activities in behalf of the Socialist candidates.

The Yiddish-speaking clothing workers of Rochester found still another outlet for their economic self-expression. Widespread dissatisfaction with the leadership of the United Garment Workers caused a walkout of the clothing workers at the national convention of the American Federation of Labor at Nashville, Tennessee, in 1914. In December of that year, under the leadership of Sidney Hillman, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America was formed in New York city. In recognition of the importance of the local industry to the organized strength of the clothing workers, the

second national convention of the Amalgamated took place in Rochester in 1916. There were enough Yiddish-speaking clothing workers in the Rochester industry to make possible the formation of a complete unit, Local 14, composed entirely of people who carried on their union activity in that language.²¹ The union was, of course, primarily concerned with the improvement of working conditions. Yet it played other roles. In the broad sense, it helped Americanize the Jewish worker by bringing him into contact with other immigrant-worker groups. This economic confederation served as a transnational agency which lifted the immigrant out of his own ethnic parochialisms. On the other hand, even in the union environment, Jewish workers, like their Italian, Lithuanian, and Polish counterparts, recognized their strong Jewish ties and were organized into a separate unit. What is more, since so large a number of Amalgamated members throughout the country were Jewish, the union itself often dealt with matters of special Jewish interest and concern. The condition of Jews in Eastern Europe and the plight of war sufferers among their coreligionists were often discussed by the Amalgamated at both local and national meetings.²²

At the turn of the century, a large part of the Jewish labor force in Rochester was employed in the local clothing industry. The newer arrivals often took up peddling. During the first five years of the new century, most of the Cohns, Levis, Levys, and Levins listed in the city directories were evenly distributed between the occupations of tailoring and peddling. Only a very few were retailers. A small number were listed as clerks, tobacconists, shoemakers, grocers, and carpenters. By 1910, the *City Directory* listed only five peddlers among these family names. While there was still a large number of tailors among this group, a larger proportion than before were now listed as retailers. In this category were vendors of clothing, coal, dry goods, furniture, and other consumer goods.²³

In the fifteen years after 1910, Jews branched out into different industries. To be sure, many former tailors opened retail clothing stores. Yet many others were represented among Rochester's paper wholesalers, jewelers, tinsmiths, optical goods distributors, cattle-men, insurance agents, machinists, real estate brokers, and produce dealers.²⁴ Moreover, in the twenties a larger number of Jewish women than ever before were active in the labor force. Many of

these were working as stenographers, saleswomen, and clerks in offices and retail stores.

The manufacture of clothing still remained a "Jewish industry" in regard to both labor and ownership. There was, of course, some tendency in Jewish circles to make extravagant claims regarding the importance of the industry. In 1911 it was estimated that "the total amount paid in wages in the Clothing industry . . . is about \$135,000 a week or \$7,000,000.00 a year. There are about 13,500 hands employed in the industry, which means that their families included, over one-fifth of the entire (Rochester) population are supported thereby."²⁵ This claim is somewhat exaggerated. Official United States *Census* figures list the following data for the men's clothing industry in Rochester:²⁶

<i>Year</i>	<i>Estab- lishments</i>	<i>Wage Earners</i>	<i>Wages</i>	<i>Value of Product</i>
1904	148	6,161	\$ 2,545,000	\$14,949,000
1909	196	7,732	3,809,000	18,879,000
1914	239	8,585	4,626,000	19,760,000
1921	120	12,370	17,373,329	50,535,000
1923	98	10,983	15,271,945	58,937,241

Several implications stem from these statistics. While the claims quoted first are not borne out by the facts given in the *Census*, nevertheless Rochester's men's clothing industry continued to employ more people than any other local industry. In addition, the value of its product was higher than that of any other local industry, with the exception of the photography industry, which, by 1921, reached a total of \$56,807,169. Clothing manufacture, nevertheless, exceeded photography in the amount of wages paid out.²⁷ The number of clothing factories rose to a peak of 239 in 1914, and then began to fall off. Quite a few mergers and consolidations took place. Gradually, as a result of larger scale operations, the factories themselves began to absorb the work of the many subcontractors who had formerly been so important a part of the industry. This helps explain why some of the sons of "boss tailors" or subcontractors pursued other occupations, once the family business had been absorbed by the growing factories.

These changes within the clothing industry itself, in addition to other external factors, helped broaden the occupational distribu-

tion of Rochester Jews. It is of interest, in this connection, to note the changes that took place among Jews in the legal and medical professions. In 1900, when there were approximately 7,000 Jews in Rochester, there was an estimated total of ten lawyers and five doctors. Ten years later, although there was a Jewish population of 11,000, an increase of more than 50 percent, there was still the same number of lawyers and doctors.²⁸ But by 1925, when Jews numbered over 15,000, showing an increase of approximately 50 percent over the preceding decade and a half, there were about forty Jewish lawyers and twenty-five Jewish doctors.²⁹

The increased entrance of Jews into what had previously been "closed" professions reveals the impact of Americanization upon the economic structure of the Jewish community. It is significant that a large number of these lawyers and physicians were native-born children of East European immigrant Jews.

In the Chamber of Commerce, Jews continued the activity they had begun in the earlier decades. In the period before the First World War, Max Lowenthal, Joseph Michaels, and Abram Katz were among the most active Jewish men. They often served on the Board of Trustees. In 1923 Simon Stein was elected assistant treasurer of the Chamber. However, as Rochester's industries became more diversified, the influence of the Jewish clothiers in the councils of the Chamber became less pronounced. Nevertheless, in any given year, there were at least five Jewish men represented on various committees. This was particularly true of the Committee on Manufactures.³⁰

Rochester Jews were achieving success in a variety of commercial enterprises. In 1911, the Rochester Knitting Works, under the leadership of Max Lowenthal, employed over 300 workers. The firm was said to have had an annual output of \$500,000. Lowenthal, in addition, was a director of the National Bank of Commerce and vice-president of the Locke Manufacturing Company.³¹ H. C. Cohn and Company, which in 1875 had bought out the manufacturers of "Superba" men's neckwear, had now become one of the largest neckwear factories in the country. Its merchandise was shipped to all parts of the country.³² In the optical field, Henry E. Kirstein continued the successful manufacture of Shuron glasses. He headed E. Kirstein and Son, the firm his father had founded.³³ Jews were

represented in the world of journalism as well. Louis Wiley, the brilliant cofounder and coeditor of the *Jewish Tidings*, had become the business manager of the Rochester *Post-Express* in 1892. Seventeen years later he left this position to join the *New York Times*, which he served in a similar capacity for many years.³⁴

It was the retail field, however, that provided romantic developments in the history of local Jewish economic life. The National Clothing Company was established in Rochester in March, 1899. This men's clothing store was part of a chain of retail outlets operated by the New York manufacturing firm of Levy, Horwitz, and Lauterbrook. In 1907 the partnership was dissolved and Abraham F. Horwitz became sole owner of three of the stores: those in Albany, in Rochester, and in Finlay, Ohio. That year he came to Rochester from New York, since it was the central point between the other two cities. At first, he expected to stay in Rochester for but a few years. He remained in the community for the rest of his life. He concentrated his efforts in Rochester and by 1910 had liquidated his other two stores.

The National Clothing Company grew from year to year. The staff of five employees in 1899 grew to 170 by 1925. In 1914 the original premises at 115 Main Street were enlarged by the acquisition of a store next door. In 1919 the continued expansion prompted the purchase of the Eggleston Hotel site on Main Street. Six years later the National Clothing Company moved to that location and was housed in a beautiful new structure. In addition to men's clothing, which the company continued to manufacture until 1926, the older lines of men's furnishings and hats were augmented by the inclusion of men's shoes and boy's apparel.

The National Clothing Company, led by Abraham F. Horwitz and his son Jesse became one of Rochester's leading retail establishments. From small beginnings it continued to progress and expand. It did not, like similar clothing stores in other parts of the country, develop into a department store. It grew into a men's specialty shop and became one of the largest single units of its kind in the country.³⁵

The B. Forman Company, a large and important women's specialty shop, had even smaller beginnings. Benjamin Forman came to New York city from Russia in 1894 at the age of 18 and worked

as a tailor. A few years later, his urge to start his own business took him to Ithaca, New York, where he soon became known as a creator of ladies' fine suits. A Rochester customer succeeded in persuading him to open up his store in her community. In 1905 he moved to the city which was to see his steady climb up the ladder of success. After four years in a small shop up one flight at Main and Cortland streets, he moved to Clinton Avenue South. Since this was still a residential neighborhood, his location proved to be a pioneering beginning of a new commercial section, which was to flourish in the years ahead. To the custom tailoring department, for which the business was already well known, Mr. Forman added ready-made quality fashions of leading manufacturers. The store grew rapidly. By the end of the First World War, annual sales had reached about \$2,000,000. In 1925 construction of a major addition was undertaken and the selling space was greatly expanded. Annual sales, by this time, had reached close to \$4,000,000. As the store expanded, new departments were added, until the B. Forman Company became one of the largest women's specialty shops in the country and gained national recognition as a leader in its own field. Like the National Clothing Company, it did not develop into a department store.

In 1916 the B. Forman Company became a charter member of the Retail Research Association and later of its affiliated organization, the Associated Merchandising Corporation. It was by far the smallest member of this group, which included such stores as Filene's of Boston, Bloomingdale's of New York, and J. L. Hudson of Detroit. Nevertheless, it played an important part within the organization. Benjamin Forman, the East European immigrant tailor, had built an establishment of local and national repute.³⁶

In 1911 two brothers, Abraham and Joseph Neisner, opened a five-and-dime store in Rochester. This was the first unit of a network of stores throughout the country. Stores were later opened in Worcester, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Port Chester, New York; Geneva, New York; Camden, New Jersey; Wilmington, Delaware; and Buffalo, New York. By 1925 a total of ten stores had grown out of the original Rochester venture. Their total annual sales amounted to well over one million dollars. The greater development of Neisner Brothers into a vast national organization

belongs to the period after 1925. Nevertheless, by that year, the company was already well launched on its climb upward. From the first, Neisner's executive offices remained in Rochester, and the members of the Neisner families continued to be identified with the local Jewish community.³⁷

Another unusual success in the retail field was achieved by Alfred Hart. His father, Moses, had operated a grocery on Hudson Avenue, beginning in 1893. When the elder Hart died, Alfred left the budding printing business he had established jointly with his brother, Leo, in order to run the grocery store. Hoping for better results than his father had achieved, he moved the store to a new location on North Street. But for many years he was harassed by high overhead and the large bills accumulated by his customers.

In 1917 he decided to open a "Self-Serving Cash Grocery" on Front Street. Here, overhead costs were cut to a minimum. The store itself looked rather barren—there were no shelves and goods were displayed in crates, barrels, and boxes. A cashier and an assistant were the only employees. But the idea was quickly accepted by the public. It has been reported that on the very first day the store was opened a sale was made once every half minute. Not long after the opening of the Front Street store, Mr. Hart transformed the older North Street store into Store Number 2 of the "Hart chain." Several months later a third store was opened on Main Street West. Then stores were opened in neighborhood sections and even in the towns adjacent to Rochester at an increasing rate. By 1927 there were one hundred Hart groceries doing an annual business of about four million dollars. It was estimated that a total of 75,000 sales a week were being made at all of these stores.³⁸ Almost from the very beginning of this enterprise Hart was assisted by Morris Levinson, a Rochester-born son of East European immigrants, who served brilliantly as general manager of the chain.

The Hart development was looked upon by the local community as a "unique Rochester enterprise." The press, in reporting the opening of the hundredth store in 1927, noted that:

... perhaps even more remarkable than the achievement itself is the fact that it has been accomplished without the borrowing of a single dollar. Every penny that is invested in the hundred Hart stores in Rochester and the immediate vicinity was earned by the Hart stores.³⁹

Thus, by the end of the first quarter of the twentieth-century Jews were continuing to integrate themselves in the expanding Rochester economy. The clothing industry, formerly the mainstay of Rochester's Jewish population, continued to play its important role. But with the passage of time, as the local economy itself became more diversified, so did Jewish economic activity broaden its field. The increased economic self-sufficiency of many of the newer immigrants helped to speed the process of Americanization. Not insignificantly, this economic pattern stimulated the development of a more unified community. The East European group was slowly achieving economic parity with the German section.

RELIGIOUS LIFE: ORTHODOX AND CONSERVATIVE

ORTHODOX life felt the impact of the mass immigration. In 1900 there were six traditional congregations in Rochester; in the twenty-five years that followed, eleven new congregations were formed. While to a large extent this rapid multiplication was caused by the numerical expansion of the traditional community, other cogent reasons must also be advanced. The congregations created by the East European community represented largely a transplantation of its recent Old World experience. They were primarily membership groups. Among Protestant churches affiliation takes place along sectarian or denominational lines; emphasis is placed upon doctrinal or credal differences. These considerations played no part in determining the affiliation of Jewish families. For the most part either socioeconomic reasons or national origins were the more significant factors.

The earlier East European settlers tended to retain loyalties to those older congregations that were established before 1900. Immigrants who arrived after that time were the chief organizers of the newer Orthodox congregations. Laboring tailors tended to worship with their colleagues, Galicians with Galicians, Lithuanians with Lithuanians. As a result, the Orthodox community became more and more splintered and the broader issues that should have united it were often overlooked in the tensions that characterize fragmented, struggling, and competitive organizations.

Attendances at services, by the standards of our day, were relatively high. Yet one could already see the inroads being made upon

the traditional religious community by the secular forces. Socialist and labor movements attracted the interest of a goodly number of the new immigrants. To many in these movements it appeared that Orthodoxy's major interest was the regulation of ritual practices. Synagogue leaders seemed to evince little social concern, although, to be sure, the congregations served as reservoirs of inspiration for philanthropic work. They exhorted the community, sometimes even organized it, to extend assistance to persecuted brethren overseas and to the local needy.¹ Yet the constant arguments between rabbis and congregations over the question of *kashruth*, the dietary rules, easily helped weaken the hold of the synagogue upon the immigrant community. The attitude of large numbers of Yiddish-speaking workers might be summed up in the words of an earlier critic of Orthodox rabbis in Russia. He had pointed an accusing finger at them, saying: "For the welfare of your community you do nothing . . . no communal matter ever comes before you; you deal only with the butchers, and the cooks, rendering decisions on forbidden foods."²

Rabbi David Ginsberg, leader of the older congregations, had come to Rochester in 1895 to serve Beth Israel Congregation. His younger colleague, Rabbi Isaac Caplan, came to the city in 1902 to replace Rabbi Abraham Rosen, who had left a year before. At first Caplan served the B'nai David and Vaad Hakolel congregations; later he was affiliated with several other groups. Of these men and their congregations a local newsletter writer, in 1908, had written this partisan description for the European Hebrew journal, *Hayehudi*:

In Rochester we have many groups and congregations but peace reigns supreme. There are two rabbis, the older rabbi David Ginsberg, and the newer rabbi Isaac Caplan. But even though both of them are different in terms of personality, they get along very well, the older rabbi is sharp witted and somewhat of a merchant and also rather wealthy. His outward appearance is not so rabbinical-looking, while the younger rabbi looks more like a rabbi. The older rabbi, somehow in the nature of things, runs after the richer people, while the younger rabbi hobnobs with the *balebatim*. The older rabbi doesn't interest himself so much in things outside of his congregation, while the younger rabbi is interested in all Jewish matters, whether of a personal or a communal nature.

These two rabbis, nevertheless, honor and respect one another, something that is not found in many Jewish communities in America, and they definitely are models of good relations.³

The *kashruth* problem was such a source of inner strife that it was somewhat extravagant to claim that "peace reigns supreme." The reader will recall that the anarchical conditions in this area—the lack of adequate communal control and the existence of a confederacy of butchers and ritual slaughterers in violation of Jewish law—had caused trouble as early as 1886. In the intervening years, matters had gone from bad to worse. Each butcher employed his own *shohet*, or ritual slaughterer and, as a result, abuses in the dietary laws were inevitable. Since the *shohet* was employed by the butcher he was often controlled by him. He was sometimes made to violate the dietary rules regarding the fitness or health of the animal in order to safeguard the financial interests of his employer, the butcher. From time to time, the rabbis, technically the supervisors of the *shohetim*, were also involved in controversies with the butchers. This uneasy, chaotic state of affairs was a perennial powder keg, which blew up in the face of the community at regular intervals.

By 1910 the situation had become so aggravated that a major reorganization of the Orthodox community was deemed necessary. The larger Orthodox congregations had come together and decided that as a first step it would be necessary to appoint one man as chief rabbi of all local congregations.⁴ During the preceding five years Rabbi David Ginsberg had come to be regarded as the leading spokesman of the larger Orthodox congregations. Undoubtedly, he himself aspired to the office of "chief rabbi." Nevertheless, he was not accepted by all factions. In a public statement to the press, several congregations refused to concede his claims of being "Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox Jewish congregations of Rochester."⁵ Several members of Beth Israel and Beth Hakneses Hachodesh headed a United Rabbinical Committee which for over a year searched for a rabbi who might come to Rochester to unite the Orthodox community. In August, 1911, this committee made its report public. With unbounded joy they wrote:

With the advent of "Sabbath Nahamu" (The Sabbath of Consolation) there came to our city the great and wonderful rabbi and preacher,

Solomon Sadowsky of Albany, New York, whom the "United Rabbinical Committee" had long awaited.

On that Sabbath this worthy rabbi delivered an address in Beth Hakneses Hachodesh on the theme: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." It was a deep, wonderful and spiritual talk. The public was so exalted that they were not even affected by the stuffy air which crowding of the multitude had created.

On Sunday, when the worthy rabbi gave a talk in Beth Israel synagogue and the entire community was present, the effect was as if some supernatural event had taken place. Orthodox and radicals outran each other to obtain a seat. Young boys on bicycles left the parks and their picnics and came to hear the wonderful rabbi and preacher . . .

We are very satisfied that ultimately our city has the opportunity of having a rabbi with such great and true spiritual qualities which will influence all and sundry.⁶

The organizing ability of Rabbi Solomon Sadowsky, who was a moving spirit in the Orthodox community until his death in 1946, now made itself felt. He gathered a number of prominent lay leaders about him and was instrumental in bringing to Rochester Rabbi Gabriel Zev Margolis, Chief Rabbi of Boston, Massachusetts. A series of meetings, uniting all the Orthodox congregations, culminated in the establishment of a *Vaad Hakashruth*, a community board in control of ritual slaughtering. Comprehensive regulations were established which were aimed at uniting the entire Orthodox community through this Kashruth Board and under the direction of the "chief Rabbi," Rabbi Sadowsky.⁷

For a time this new arrangement proved most encouraging. Mr. Harris Nusbaum was elected president, and each Orthodox congregation cooperated by sending three delegates to the Board. Soon, however, even this communally controlled group was challenged. Heated disputes among the Jewish butchers caused dissension in the ranks. The Rochester Hebrew Dietary Association, as the *Vaad* was called, was often the subject of controversy. It, too, suffered a fate similar to the half-hearted attempts at kashruth control of the previous century: unfavorable public press notices.⁸ In addition, kashruth in the early twentieth century was as much a cause of rabbinical and congregational disputes as it had been in the nineteenth century. The *Vaad Hakolel* Congregation, it will be recalled,

was organized in 1895, in protest over this issue. In 1904 a group of families who themselves were butchers and interested in the butchers' point of view organized congregation Ahavas Achim Anshe Radishkowitch. This group remained the stronghold of the butchers and, together with the Vaad Hakolel Congregation, remained aloof from many of the joint activities of the other Orthodox synagogues. In 1913, after a fiery battle with the Vaad Hakashruth, the Ahavas Achim Congregation brought Rabbi Solomon Levin to serve as its leader. This was also done so that the congregation might have its own rabbinic spokesman to represent it on the Vaad Hakashruth. The larger and older congregations had their "chief rabbi," Vaad Hakolel Congregation had its Rabbi Caplan, and now the Anshe Radishkowitch group had Rabbi Solomon Levin.⁹

Yet the Vaad Hakashruth did become a more constructive force in the Orthodox community. The money butchers paid the Vaad for each fowl slaughtered was soon found sufficient to cover its own operating costs. It was then decided to raise the original fee from three cents per fowl to five cents. The additional two cents were to be used as a subsidy for the Orthodox Hebrew school, the Talmud Torah.

Prior to 1916, Orthodox Jews who wanted to use the ritual bath, the *Mikvah*, to comply with traditional practice would visit the facilities of private baths established in several homes. One such widely used private Mikvah was conducted by Mr. Harris Levi on Hanover Street. That year, because of the unsatisfactory nature of these private establishments, the Beth Hatevilah, a community Mikvah, was set up on Vienna Street. Mr. Harris Nusbaum became president of this organization, too. Not long after its establishment, the Vaad, from the revenue accumulated through its fees for ritual slaughtering, helped subsidize the operation of the Mikvah.¹⁰

Inner disunity was caused by Orthodoxy's lack of control over its own ritual institutions. The disregard of central authority was both a cause and an effect of the further splintering of the group. From 1904 to 1910, six small congregations were organized.¹¹ These congregations, Anshe Poland (1904), Ahavas Achim Anshe, Radishkowitch (1904), Ahavas Achim Anshe Kipel Volin (1906), Etz Chaim (1909), and Ein Jacob (1910) were duly incorporated, and each conducted its own religious services.¹² While some of these congrega-

tions were willing to accept the rabbinic authority of Rabbi David Ginsberg and later of Rabbi Solomon Sadowsky, there was, as we have seen, no unanimity about it. A vicious circle had set in. On the one hand, the large number of small congregations encouraged dissidence. On the other hand, the inner strife undoubtedly helped bring about the formation of these small congregational units.

At about the same time as Rabbi Sadowsky was called by the United Rabbinical Committee, another act of union was taking place in the community. While it was a farsighted, healthy, and helpful step, unfortunately it did not go far enough. For several years, the congregations of *B'nai David* and *Chevra Chayteem* (Congregation of Tailors) had been united in various activities. In 1902 they purchased land together for a cemetery on Stone Road, in Greece, New York.¹³ The following year, members of these two congregations were among the vanguard of those who helped re-organize the *Talmud Torah*, the Hebrew School for elementary religious education.¹⁴ Hyman Goldman, a devoted member of the Orthodox community, labored tirelessly to bring these two congregations together officially. In the spring of 1911 this was achieved and elaborate plans were laid for the erection of a large and spacious building. Impressed by a synagogue they had visited in Toronto, Canada, the joint building committee decided to use it as a model.¹⁵ The site of the *B'nai David* Congregation on Hanover Street was selected. The facilities of the disbanded *Chevra Chayteem* Congregation on Rhine Street were soon taken over by the *Ahavas Achim Anshe Radishkowitch* Congregation, which had been located on Chatham Street.¹⁶ The new building was completed in record time. On September 10, a little more than five months after ground was broken, the giant synagogue, newly and appropriately named *Beth Hamedrash Hagodel* (The Great Synagogue), was publicly dedicated. Rabbi Solomon Sadowsky, who had just taken up his residence in Rochester, was joined in delivering the dedicatory addresses by Rabbi Horace J. Wolf, assistant at Temple *B'rith Kodesh*.¹⁷ Several thousand people crowded the \$75,000 building. Yet, while this amalgamation represented a significant and constructive step, from that day to this, no further union of the small Orthodox congregations has taken place in Rochester.

Moreover, the external pressures of environment proved to be

still another disruptive force within the Orthodox community. It will be recalled that as early as 1889, Beth Israel dealt with the needs of its American-born youngsters, by introducing, for a short period only, an English sermon at Sabbath services. On the whole, in the Orthodox congregations in Rochester, as in Europe, the sermon was of only minor religious significance. The rabbi was not looked upon as preacher but rather as judge and scholar. He delivered an instructive sermon at the services only on rare occasions during the year. His was principally the function of a teacher, not a preacher. As is already well known, the Reform rabbi, not unlike the Protestant minister, looked upon the weekly sermon as one of his principal duties. Perhaps because of the example of the Reform pattern, itself a product of the influence of the environment, or because of the concern of elders for the moral instruction of their children, members of Beth Israel were determined to engage an English-speaking rabbi. They could not, and would not, dispense with their "Rav," the rabbi-scholar, who served as their Talmudical jurist. They decided to invite an additional rabbi to serve jointly with the older "Rav."

So it was that in 1906 Beth Israel called young Rabbi Nathan Blechman to its pulpit, scant weeks after he had been ordained as one of the first graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Rabbi Blechman was literally "called." His salary of \$1,200 per annum did not come out of the congregational treasury but was raised by a group of Beth Israel men who wanted a rabbi who could represent Judaism to their children and to the Jewish community. During his stay, which lasted but a single year, Rabbi Blechman helped broaden the activities of the congregation. Many Zionist meetings were held in his synagogue. He became friendly with the President of the University of Rochester, Dr. Rush Rhees. On several occasions Dr. Rhees addressed Jewish meetings at the Beth Israel Synagogue. Blechman also represented the congregation in non-Jewish circles and gained for them a wider civic recognition.

Within the congregation, the innovation of having an English-speaking rabbi proved interesting and helpful. It is, perhaps, a characteristic quality of the inner conservatism of the Rochester Jewish community that in initiating this departure, there was no

formal break with the traditional ritual or liturgy of the congregation. This was merely a first step in an evolutionary process rather than a wild break with past procedure. While Blechman's administration did not introduce visible reforms, the desire for accommodating the congregation to the pressure of the environment was indeed strong. Accordingly, late Friday evening gatherings—not services—were instituted. No attempt was made officially to have these get-togethers supplant the traditional sunset service, which was difficult for many to attend. Yet, in practice, this arrangement attracted many people, especially the youth who attended no other religious service during the week. Blechman attracted large numbers who came to enjoy the social hour as well as the novelty of a weekly lecture in English.

The new rabbi offered a vital educational program, too. He organized an afternoon Hebrew School, staffed with volunteer teachers, as well as the first Orthodox Sunday School in Rochester. An education committee was established to concern itself with the progress of the children. This was a modest beginning. Yet it was important because it was the first Orthodox congregation to concern itself with public instruction of the young. Of equal significance is the fact that with the organization of Beth Israel's Sunday School, young girls of Orthodox families were for the first time given an opportunity to obtain Jewish religious education. Women also gained for themselves a wider sphere of activity in the young people's group and the Ladies' Auxiliary which were organized by the new rabbi.

Here, then, are the beginnings of a conscious adaptation of the religious life to the environment by an Orthodox group. It must be remembered, of course, that Beth Israel was comprised of people who had now been in Rochester more than half a lifetime. Time and environment played their influential roles. Of equal importance, however is the evolutionary character of the early stages of religious change. Overtly, no break had taken place in either the ritual or theology. Yet we cannot overlook the new patterns emerging regarding the function and role of rabbi and congregation. The rabbi, not unlike his Reform or Protestant counterpart, was now conceived of as a community leader, an organizer and group worker, an educator and preacher. The synagogue, too, was to be

not only a religious but also a social and educational center. Symbolic of the gradualism of the change, indeed even of the staunch desire not to overthrow established precedent, was the continuation of the Orthodox "Rav" as titular head of the congregation, by the side of the new rabbi.¹⁸

Despite his reelection, Rabbi Blechman left Rochester in the fall of 1907, after serving only a year. But the congregation was impressed with the need for continuing its new arrangement and it immediately sought another English-speaking rabbi. Dr. Jacob Z. Lauterbach, a native of Austria and a Talmudic scholar in his own right, was invited to fill Rabbi Blechman's vacated position. He had previously ministered in Huntsville, Alabama, and in Peoria, Illinois. He had also served as one of the office editors of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. During his four-year tenure at Beth Israel, Dr. Lauterbach continued to build on the foundations laid by his predecessor. In addition to delivering the weekly Friday evening lecture, he now preached once a month at the Sabbath morning service. The Hebrew and Sunday schools were strengthened and advanced.

As time wore on, Lauterbach came more and more to be regarded as the rabbi of Beth Israel. Rabbi David Ginsberg was aspiring to recognition as "chief rabbi" of the Orthodox community. He came to have less and less of a personal affiliation with any one congregation. Beth Israel, itself, was also moving toward a closer identification with its English-speaking rabbi.

In 1911, several removals took place. Rabbi Ginsberg left Rochester to go to Wilkes-Barre and Dr. Lauterbach went to Cincinnati to teach Talmud at the Hebrew Union College.¹⁹ As already noted, the community now made a united effort to elect a "chief rabbi" of all Orthodox congregations and brought to this post Rabbi Solomon Sadowsky of Albany. Beth Israel played an important part in the efforts of the United Rabbinical Committee. Nevertheless, the securing of an English-speaking rabbi became so important a part of their program that they immediately sought a replacement for Dr. Lauterbach. Once again they turned to a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Paul Chertoff was elected rabbi and came to Rochester in August, 1911, hardly a month after his graduation from the Seminary.

It was during Rabbi Chertoff's ministry at the Leopold Street *Shul*, as Beth Israel came to be known, that the congregation tended to be distinguished from all other Orthodox groups in the city. Its membership consisted not only of the oldest and most respected East European settlers, but also of the wealthiest among the Yiddish-speaking community. Its families had the largest number of American-born children. Rabbi Chertoff, young and enthusiastic, was able to win the confidence of the youth of the congregation. He organized a number of clubs and through this medium was able to make his fine influence felt upon the youngsters. Religious school celebrations organized by Rabbi Chertoff made the atmosphere of the synagogue congenial to the younger people. The young boys, who became Bar Mitzvah on their thirteenth birthday, were expected to deliver an English oration in the synagogue on these occasions. This was an innovation for an Orthodox synagogue in Rochester, but it helped the young boys feel themselves more a part of the service. Rabbi Chertoff was also a splendid influence in the lives of many of the younger men. When he organized the Young Judea clubs in 1914, he helped fashion the future leadership of the American Jewish community, for among those who came under his wing were local boys such as Philip S. Bernstein and Milton Steinberg, who were later to achieve great distinction as rabbis. Rabbi Chertoff also helped organize the Emma Lazarus Club, an adult cultural group which exists in Rochester to this day.

All of these activities made Beth Israel's English-speaking rabbi the focus of the congregation. Rabbi Sadowsky as the "Rav," the Yiddish-speaking jurist-scholar, was not expected to be active in the internal affairs of the congregation. He had little or no contact with the youth program and occupied the pulpit but once a year, at the service on the second day of *Rosh Hashana*, the Jewish New Year. He was respected and revered by the broad masses of his constituency, but he did not function primarily as an official of Beth Israel. Rather he was looked upon as the spiritual leader of Orthodoxy in Rochester. In the nature of things, then, it was to be expected that Beth Israel's younger members would press for a reorientation of the congregational program. The new elements of that program, begun in the days of Blechman and advanced by Lauterbach and Chertoff—the Sunday School, the club activities, the regular Eng-

lish sermon—these had succeeded over the years in appealing to the younger families.

This situation was, of course, no novelty in the American Jewish experience. By 1910, and even earlier in some cities, many older Orthodox congregations were shaping their religious and educational programs along lines which were later to be recognized as characteristic of Conservative Judaism. This kind of metamorphosis, in fact, brought graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary to many pulpits throughout the country. These were rabbis committed to traditional Judaism, but desirous of building a traditional movement that would be in harmony with the demands of American life.²⁰ It is possible that if population mobility had not been an additional factor in the situation, Beth Israel would have, in a matter of a few years, evolved into a Conservative congregation. As it happened, however, the younger and wealthier members were already beginning to move into the eastern part of the city, taking up their residence in the area in which German Jews had begun to move twenty-five years earlier. Now that a considerable number of them were living in this newer neighborhood they were desirous of establishing a congregation nearer to their homes. Their experience at Beth Israel, beginning in 1906, proved significant. They would now organize a religious society to "conserve Judaism" while attempting to achieve a conscious adaptation to the environment.

In a way, the fact that the younger and more affluent members had moved to the newer neighborhood served the cause of Beth Israel unity. English-speaking rabbis and the network of cultural and social activities pleased the younger members of that congregation. But the older people were naturally suspicious of these things and friction between the two groups was inevitable. Now that the younger members were leaving the neighborhood of Leopold Street and talked of launching a congregation in their new environment, the older men at Beth Israel were left in control with no dissenting group to contend with. But unfortunately for them, they were also left without much of a congregational future. Rabbi Paul Chertoff struggled on with this difficult situation until the summer of 1916. Then in the face of the inevitable loss of his younger people, he left Rochester.²¹

Early in 1915 this group of younger members had already begun

to meet in private homes to discuss the possibilities of organizing a new congregation. After holding several such gatherings they passed a resolution which was then printed and distributed to prospective members as a "prospectus." This "prospectus," which follows, has several interesting implications:

Recognizing that it is our duty as Jews to bear witness to the truths of our faith in our days and generation, as our fathers did in theirs, and animated by love and loyalty to our God, to our Divine Law and our people, we hereby constitute ourselves a Jewish congregation for the purpose of conserving Judaism, maintaining public worship, and furthering the principles and practices of our holy religion based upon the traditions of our faith.

It is proposed that the form of service be conducted as follows:

- First: There shall be family pews for men and women.
- Second: Prayers are to be in Hebrew and in English, and to be conducted by the Rabbi, Cantor and choir.
- Third: Congregational singing conducted without organ, by Cantor and Choir composed of Jews.
- Fourth: Congregation to wear hat and tallis [prayer shawl].
- Fifth: Services to be held each day of week with special services on Friday evening, Saturday morning, and holidays.
- Sixth: Daily and Sunday School to be supported by the congregation.

We, the undersigned, firmly believing in the necessity of such a congregation, hereby subscribe to membership in it, for which privilege we agree to pay dues in the sum of at least \$15 per year.²²

In this pronouncement we see a desire to align the group with the growing sentiment among the younger members of America's East European Jewish community who wanted to "conserve Judaism," but in a somewhat altered form. Family pews were an adaptation of Reform Judaism, as were prayers in the English language. Yet the group would not accept what they thought were the more radical innovations of Reform: the use of an organ, the dispensing with head covering and prayer shawl, or having a choir in which non-Jews sang. To be sure, one does not find here any reference to a philosophy of Judaism or to theological or historical interpretations. Perhaps such a discussion could not appear in a "prospectus" of this kind. And yet one suspects that the founders themselves were probably not very much interested in these deeper issues; they were

concerned with the formal and practical questions of ritual conduct and liturgical procedure. These men were dissatisfied with a transplanted East European Orthodoxy. They were, however, emotionally and even socially unable to adjust to Reform Judaism.

Apparently, they were not alone in their thinking. Within a few months they reported that fifty-five families had joined as members.²³ When summer came, interest lagged. Nothing was done that fall, but in November a group of the leaders decided to revive the plan. A meeting was called at the home of Mr. Louis Frankel and most of the men present at this meeting became the guiding spirits of the new congregation. In addition to their host, Charles Frankel, Isaac Joffe, Charles Moscowitz, Reuben Goldstein, Louis Sarachan, Benjamin Rosenthal, Bernard Rose, Hyman J. Cohen, and Charles Cohen were in attendance. There were others, among them Alfred Hart and Samuel Sturman, who were not present at this meeting but were actively interested.²⁴ Abraham D. Joffe, a leading Orthodox figure, was also one of the strong influences in this new movement.²⁵ That afternoon they succeeded in rekindling the interest in this new project, for only two days had passed when this letter was sent out to almost one hundred people:

. . . At a preliminary meeting held last Sunday afternoon, a temporary organization was formed for the purpose of establishing in this city a new Conservative congregation along modern lines. A subscription fund was immediately started and it will interest you to know that we have already nearly \$4,000 subscribed by only nine persons. Mr. Charles Frankel was elected temporary chairman, and Mr. Isaac Joffe, secretary. . . .²⁶

Activity continued at an increased pace. A committee was appointed to visit the leaders of Temple Beth El in Buffalo "for the purpose of obtaining information about a Conservative congregation." This resulted in arranging for Rabbi Max Drob of that congregation to visit Rochester in order to help in the formulation of plans.²⁷ This contact produced helpful ideas and probably (although it is difficult to be certain), the name of the new congregation, which had up to that time been nameless. Within a few months, on March 19, 1916, an incorporation meeting was held and the Beth El Congregation of Rochester was officially established. This meeting took place at

310 Oxford Street, the first meeting to take place in the congregation's newly acquired "home."²⁸

The problem of a site seemed to be solved. Oxford Street was in the center of the new and rapidly developing Jewish neighborhood. The well-known Rochester architect J. Foster Warner was engaged and he submitted plans for a synagogue structure that was to be built on the Oxford Street property. These plans called for the construction of a building to house the synagogue auditorium, while the dwelling already on the property was to be moved to the rear for use as a school and meeting place. In April a reception and housewarming was held at the Oxford Street house and a large number of people attended.²⁹ In the meantime, however, it was learned that the Park Avenue Baptist Church, at Park Avenue and Meigs Street, was for sale. At first \$75,000 was asked, but after a number of months of protracted discussions the Baptist Church was purchased for \$45,000.³⁰ The acceptance of its offer by the church was an occasion of great joy, since bids for construction of the new building had ranged from \$70,000 to \$85,000. Enthusiasm ran so high that a motion was passed "that a banquet be held annually on November 23, for the purpose of celebrating the purchase of the property for Temple Beth El at Park Avenue and Meigs Street."³¹ Title to the building was not transferred until February 1, 1917. Within a few weeks after the purchase, however, the congregation was already conducting special meetings in the building in order to make plans for its occupancy.³²

The first services in the Park Avenue building were held on the Passover of 1917. However, as much as a year before this time, the group had recognized the need to secure the services of a rabbi. "We ought to begin looking for our rabbi," they said. "As soon as people will see we are seeking a rabbi, the public will be more vitally interested and help the movement."³³ Apparently they were unsuccessful in securing a permanent rabbi for the fall holidays of 1916. Instead, they turned to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America for a student rabbi, who officiated jointly with a local cantor. These services were held in rented quarters in Culver Hall on University Avenue.³⁴ The services were strictly traditional, the liturgy rendered principally in Hebrew. There was no choir, but men and women sat in the same sections and the sermons were, of

course, in the English language. Shortly after the property on Park Avenue was acquired, a committee headed by Isaac Joffe was appointed to seek the services of a permanent rabbi. This committee visited Dr. Stephen S. Wise in New York city. He recommended to them Dr. Joel Blau, who was terminating his services as rabbi of B'nai Jeshurun in New York city. Dr. Blau was a compatriot of Dr. Wise, born in Hungary and trained at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Mr. Charles Bender, who had recently arrived from England, was engaged as cantor and teacher. Mr. Samuel Katz was also engaged to serve as sexton and teacher.³⁵ After the dedicatory services held during Passover, the first late Friday evening service took place in May. Later that month the first annual meeting was held amidst much joy and happiness. Scarcely eighteen months had gone by since the first meetings looking toward this day had been held. A glowing report printed as the Souvenir Program, was presented to the congregation by the devoted officers.³⁶ This report offered an account of the struggles and successes of the infant congregation. It said that:

. . . the history of Temple Beth El is the history of the work of but a handful of men, who applied themselves resolutely to the task of establishing a modern conservative Synagogue. Such a Synagogue represented a long felt need in Rochester.

This need had been expressed on innumerable occasions, both in private conversation and in public meeting, by men and women intent upon the preservation of Judaism in America. Their's was an ideal vision; a house of worship which shall appeal to both young and old, in which all that is best in Jewish life and in modern thought shall appear beautifully harmonized; in which decorum shall go hand in hand with religious enthusiasm, loyalty to tradition with genuine spiritual aspiration.

The Executive Board has every reason to be proud of its accomplishment. In the past few months we have made rapid strides. . . . We have a Rabbi who is endowed with the gift of true leadership, and a Cantor who has called forth favorable comment . . . in a short period we have received a remarkably enthusiastic response from all sections of the community. . . .³⁷

The first years of the new congregation were difficult ones. Indeed, the congregation wanted to espouse a program "in which all

that is best in Jewish life and in modern thought shall appear beautifully harmonized." Yet, there was no general agreement as to the exact manner in which these ideals were to be implemented. Dr. Blau, trained as a liberal rabbi, set up patterns which were associated with "moderate Reform." At first there were no daily services, no sunset service on Sabbath eve, and the prayer book used was not strictly traditional. The thinking of the almost seventy families who made up the membership had not yet crystallized. Many were anxious to ape the activities and outlook of Temple B'rith Kodesh. During the first months of its organized life, under the influence of Dr. Blau, the congregation was veering toward Reform rather than becoming the left wing of the Orthodoxy it had left. In 1918 Conservative Judaism in Rochester seemed destined to become a pale Reform.

That year, Dr. Blau left the congregation after having served eighteen months. Beth El was without a rabbi for the High Holy Days services. Dr. Israel Friedlaender of the Jewish Theological Seminary faculty served as guest rabbi. The effect of his saintly presence and sage advice was broad and lasting. He succeeded in welding the group together, in identifying it with the viewpoint of the Seminary, and in moving it closer to the traditional viewpoint. For one year longer no rabbi headed the congregation. Not long afterward, Mr. Samuel Cohen was elected president and in March, 1919, Rabbi Jacob S. Minkin, a Seminary graduate, was asked to lead the congregation.³⁸ With Rabbi Minkin at the helm a Sisterhood and a Men's Club were organized, daily services were instituted, and the Hebrew School curriculum was intensified. A more traditional outlook developed. The affiliation of the congregation in 1920 with the United Synagogue of America was an indication of its desire to identify itself fully with the more traditional elements in American Judaism.³⁹ Although still tempted to imitate some of the innovations of Temple B'rith Kodesh and living somewhat in its shadow, Temple Beth El was, nevertheless, slowly emerging with an independent, self-sufficient viewpoint. It had moved to a point equidistant between Reform and Orthodoxy.

The Sisterhood, formed in 1919, had as its first leader Mrs. Harris Joffe, and under the successive presidencies of Mrs. Harry Holtzman, Mrs. Mary Olsan, Mrs. Jack Bieber, and Mrs. Sol Aiole, it grew

into a vital adjunct of the temple. Socially, culturally, and financially, the Sisterhood integrated itself fully into the life of the congregation. In 1923 the Men's Club was organized and it, too, became a vital part of the congregation. Isaac Joffe was its first president and he remained in office for the following two years.⁴⁰

By 1925 Beth El had gained wide recognition in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Many families who were formerly affiliated with the Orthodox congregations in the older Jewish sections had now moved to the eastern part of the city. It was from these groups that Beth El drew its membership. By then, almost two hundred families had joined the congregation and an additional one hundred people purchased seats for the High Holy Days. They supported an annual budget of \$21,000, although not without financial problems.⁴¹

The congregation had developed a number of joint social meetings with Temple B'rith Kodesh, and was respected as an established coequal.⁴² Yet, despite its numerical growth and widespread acceptance, it was still looked upon with suspicion by the older Orthodox community. Old-timers still recall many situations where grandparents would not wish to attend Bar Mitzvah services of their grandsons if these were to be held at Temple Beth El. It was still not considered correct for devout Orthodox Jews to worship at Beth El services.

Beth El was to reach its full stature in a later period. Yet, after its first eight years of organized existence it showed signs of justifying the faith of its founders. It provided the American-born children of East European immigrants with a congenial atmosphere. And yet, like all of contemporary Judaism, it was faced with a dilemma. It had been founded principally by men who were anxious to transmit to their children a meaningful Jewish tradition. In the process, however, it had become so increasingly child-centered that the need for religious enthusiasm on the part of the adults was almost forgotten. By 1925 at almost every meeting of the Board of Trustees there was echoed the question that had now become familiar: "How can we increase the poor attendance at our religious services?"⁴³

One interesting exception to this pattern of general religious indifference was Alfred Hart. In the community he came to be

regarded as a legendary person. Born of parents who followed the Reform mode, in his maturing years, he himself found personal fulfillment in the traditional religious life. He endeavored through personal example to lead many of his coreligionists to a higher understanding of the Jewish religion. He rarely missed the daily morning service at Beth El. He attempted constantly to influence his colleagues and friends to observe the traditional ritual and he worked closely with the young people of the congregation. In the minds of many people he became synonymous with Temple Beth El. He was a rare kind of layman, who almost singlehandedly tried to stem the tides of apathy to things religious.

Yet, in this matter of religious enthusiasm, conservative Beth El was no longer alone. Temple B'rith Kodesh had been in such a situation for a generation or more. Even Orthodox congregations, although multiplying on every side, were no longer attracting large attendances or wielding a significant influence on the lives of their adherents. Paradoxically, this was an age of larger synagogues but of weaker religious loyalties.⁴⁴

Congregation Tiphereth Israel was established in 1923 to serve those Orthodox Jews living in the southeastern part of the city for whom the conservative Temple Beth El was unsatisfactory. Beth Jehudah was organized in 1925 in order to fulfill the needs of those who, after 1920, began to move northward into the St. Paul Street section. Both became necessary as a result of the movement of population. Even the formation of Temple Beth El, as we have seen, was in some respects due to this same cause. Yet this was obviously not the reason for the establishment, between 1910 and 1921, of five additional Orthodox congregations by East European Jews. These came into being in fairly rapid succession: Ein Jacob in 1910; Kneses Israel in 1914; B'nai Judah in 1915; Poale Tzedek in 1917; Ahavas Achim Anschei Estreich in 1921.⁴⁵ The amalgamation, in 1911, of two older congregations, B'nai David and the Chevra Chayteem was apparently unprecedented in those years and it led to no further unions.

We have estimated that there was a Jewish population growth of 4,000 in the decade between 1910 and 1920. Yet, not even this factor is sufficient in itself to explain the multiplication of new congregations. Their combined memberships in 1920 could not have ex-

ceeded 300 families. They were, in the main, synagogues of the *shtibel* (private home) variety. They were small, fairly exclusive, and composed of groups of intimate friends and family units. Their existence emphasized the further divisiveness of the Orthodox community. A great deal of the warmth and charm of traditional Jewish life was dissipated as a result of the unnecessary rivalries that this multiplicity created. Each group conducted its own separate services in small and often uninspiring quarters, when they might have worshiped together in the larger synagogues. Each group acquired its own cemetery in order to offer its members special burial privileges.

The first cemeteries of the Orthodox community, it will be recalled, were situated in the city-owned Mt. Hope Cemetery alongside of the B'rith Kodesh plot. Then, in 1895, the Vaad Hakolel Society was the first Orthodox congregation to purchase a separate Jewish cemetery. They acquired land for burial purposes in Stone Road, in the town of Greece, considered a distant place.⁴⁶ That same week, two leading members of the Beth Hakneses Hachodesh and Beth Israel congregations jointly purchased land a short distance away, on Britton Road.⁴⁷ Obviously, this private purchase was only a temporary procedure. In a matter of days both men resold this Britton Road property to their respective congregations. Accordingly, the Beth Israel group, which had been burying its deceased members in Mt. Hope Cemetery as early as 1870, now acquired a new plot of land, as a private Jewish cemetery, as did the second oldest Orthodox congregation, Beth Hakneses Hachodesh.⁴⁸ Thus, the three largest Orthodox congregations now owned private Jewish cemeteries in Greece, New York, but each with its own separate identity. Vaad Hakolel's move had precipitated the change. Beth Israel and Beth Hakneses Hachodesh, however, still retained their earlier plots at Mt. Hope Cemetery.⁴⁹

No new purchases of cemeteries are recorded again until 1902, when two congregations, Chevra Chayteem and B'nai David, purchased adjoining parcels on Stone Road.⁵⁰ This cemetery was augmented in 1920 after these two groups had merged into one congregation as the Beth Hamedrash Hagodel.⁵¹ Five years later the Kipel Volin Congregation decided to purchase its own cemetery on Britton Road. They were forced to buy the land on the west side of the

railroad tracks, since the east side was now within the limits of the city of Rochester.⁵² This problem had caused Beth Hakneses Hachodesh to purchase land on Stone Road and not contiguous to its older cemetery on Britton Road, when it sought additional cemetery space in 1922.⁵³ Indeed "objections raised by householders" in 1914 caused another small Jewish organization, the Adas Yeshurun Society, to take an option on six acres of land near Clover Hills in the distant suburb of Brighton. They did this in order to avoid the difficulty of purchasing land near Greece, within the city limits. This plan, however, never materialized.⁵⁴

By this time, enough land had been purchased by all these aforementioned congregations to care for most Orthodox burials. As newer congregations were formed they purchased from the older groups special sections of these cemeteries for their own members. They erected special entrance gates and exhibited large signs designating these plots as their congregational cemeteries. Even members of conservative Beth El had private plots in these Orthodox cemeteries. It was more than twenty years after its organization before Temple Beth El finally felt the need to acquire its own congregational cemetery. On November 16, 1937, it acquired land in Mt. Hope Cemetery.⁵⁵

In some respects these congregations enjoyed greater proximity to each other on their contiguous cemeteries than in their daily activities. Their unity on the organizational level was neither broad nor deep. To be sure, the titular office of "chief rabbi" did make for some amount of cohesiveness. In the field of ritual law represented by the Beth Din or rabbinical court, over which Rabbi Ginsburg and later Rabbi Solomon Sadowsky presided, there was general acceptance of a single authority, as a guide to practice. However, the thorniest problem of all, the supervision of *kosher* slaughtering of fowl and cattle, often became the subject of heated arguments. Frequently, Jewish butchers, some very active in one or another congregation, publicly threatened non-cooperation with the Vaad Hakashruth, the Hebrew Dietary Association and the rabbis who headed it. At least one suit was brought before a local court on this matter.⁵⁶ The butchers banded together in 1919 as the Hebrew Retail Butchers' Association of Rochester, New York, Inc., in order to present a united front whenever they felt it neces-

sary "to reform abuses . . . and to bring about mutual improvements."⁵⁷

But if their religious activities lacked organizational unity, the Orthodox community, nevertheless, was bound together by many strong ties of sentiment, language, and group loyalty. They may have had their strenuous quarrels over meat inspection, yet most of them were still united by their personal observance of the dietary laws. In some instances they chose occupations and jobs which would enable them to abstain from work on Saturday in order to observe the Sabbath. Not a few of those who migrated to Rochester after brief sojourns in the port city of New York were impelled by the religious motive: the desire to find employment in Rochester in the clothing and allied industries which made Sabbath observance possible. Many came to Rochester for no other reason. It was the existence of a colony of pious settlers who had come in the period from 1881 to 1914 that gave the community the reputation of being *frumm*, or pious.⁵⁸

This religious sentiment even had a further influence on the economic life of the immigrant. The so-called Jewish neighborhood, bounded by Central, Clifford, Clinton, and Hudson avenues, was dotted with small tailor shops. In these establishments (sometimes they were only front rooms of small cottages), both employers and employees were often pious, observant Jews. To be sure, the gap in economic status often was one cause for congregational disunity: the boss tailors were usually members of the older and larger congregations, while the newer immigrants, the hired hands, gravitated to the younger and smaller synagogues. Nevertheless, their common religious outlook, their mutual reverence for the tradition, established a community of similar interests. They rested on the Sabbath but were willing to work on Sunday. The Jewish neighborhood, in the early 1900s, virtually proclaimed the Sabbath on all sides—stores and shops were tightly closed. On Sunday, however, the whirring of sewing machines, the hurried paces of errand boys, and the clatter of wagons reverberated throughout the neighborhood. More than one Jewish tailor was arrested for running his shop on Sunday on the charge that the noise interfered with the "repose and religious liberty of the community."⁵⁹ This challenge served as a uniting factor in the face of external threat.

Psychologically, too, the East European community possessed few of the signs of paralyzing inhibitions which would make them want to shield their staunch group loyalty from public view. Undoubtedly the great predominance of Jews who lived in this section helped foster this feeling of inner security. There were times when they even conducted some of their religious ceremonies in the city streets. There were occasions, such as a parade in 1906, when the Rumanian Aid Society sponsored a march through the streets followed by a procession of 500 men headed by a band of 28 pieces. They were dedicating a *Sefer Torah*, a scroll of the Law. The scroll was carried from the home of its owner through the public thoroughfares to a synagogue. The local press reported that "over the scroll a great silken canopy fringed with silver, known as a 'hupah' was carried by four men with poles. Each of the 500 men wore over his suit a great talith or praying cloth or shawl."⁶⁰ Events such as these must have made a strong impression upon the minds of this immigrant community. Young and old alike must have experienced a keen sense of belonging. The ethnic-religious community may have had its serious organizational rivalries and differences. It had, however, a psychological and sentimental unity.

Still another common religious concern of the Orthodox community helped to foster group solidarity. There had always been unanimous agreement among pious Jews regarding the need for religious education. Until 1903, most of the youngsters were given instruction in the Hebrew language and Jewish ritual by private teachers who conducted schools in their own homes. Seven years earlier, a group of leading citizens had organized a community-sponsored institution known as the Rochester Hebrew Religious School. Apparently the quarters were soon outgrown. In the winter of 1903, it was decided to reorganize the Religious School when the ardent worker Abraham D. Joffe had indicated his willingness to contribute \$1,000 to expand its program. With this sum added to the \$2,000 the school had saved during its seven years of operation, a building was purchased at 164 Chatham Street. Here it was proposed not only to conduct a school, but also to establish an *Hach-nosas Orchim*, a boarding house for newly arrived immigrants. There had been such a service at the old Religious School, too, but facilities there had been too small to take care of the large number

of unsettled immigrants who needed to be cared for upon arrival in the city.⁶¹

These activities—the education of the young and the housing of new immigrants—cut across congregational lines. The men active in the school's founding and support were members of various congregations. Common sympathy for intensive Jewish education brought them together to pool their energies in behalf of the Talmud Torah, as the new school was called. Through this means congregational rivalries were somewhat transcended. Before long, more than 200 students were enrolled. Many were children of poor parents and were given instruction free of charge.⁶²

The Talmud Torah continued to grow in numbers and in program. Children came every afternoon, save Friday, after their regular public school classes and remained for three or four hours. After 1913 the Talmud Torah was located in the newly erected building of the Associated Hebrew Charities on Baden Street. Enrollment continued to increase and in the following ten years it doubled the size of its earlier student body: more than 400 children were in daily attendance. This number represented about one third of all the children receiving Jewish instruction in 1922.

As the school grew, its operating costs rose; by 1922 its budget had reached \$18,000. We have seen how the Vaad Hakashruth was induced to help support the school by special subsidies. But the threat of large budgets was not the school's most serious challenge. The population movement which began after the First World War removed it from the center of a concentrated Jewish neighborhood. Associated with the question of mobility was the problem of new congregations in new neighborhoods. Temple Beth El, in the south-eastern section of the city, had established a Hebrew School as part of its congregational program. Beth Jehudah Center, established in 1925 in the growing northeastern Jewish neighborhood, was incorporated with the express object of worshiping according to Jewish Orthodox custom and "to establish and maintain a Hebrew School."⁶³

On the horizon one could see the possibilities of the gradual decline of the Talmud Torah. In 1922, 270 children were reported to be in attendance at Temple Beth El's Hebrew and Sunday schools. Beth Jehudah Center also drew children into its own school

system. The pattern of having congregational schools, rather than a single communal school, was now developing. At the close of the first quarter of this century, the Talmud Torah was still the most important school in Rochester. But before very long it declined under the weight of the two countermovements: the shift of population and the rise of the congregational school. Neither of these factors, at the outset, was the result of ideological policy, but clearly the product of social and economic developments.

Thus, religious education, which at first served as a vehicle for group cohesiveness, gradually lost its role of unifier. By 1922 it was estimated that 1,240 children, aged five to fourteen, were receiving formal Jewish training. While the communally sponsored Talmud Torah, with 400 students, was responsible for the largest single proportion of this total, the remaining 840 were principally in the hands of congregational schools.⁶⁴ Religious education was already in general decline. Only 50 percent of the estimated total of 2,500 children of school age were receiving Jewish instruction.⁶⁵

Nor could East European congregations claim the right of speakership for all Orthodox Jews in Rochester. The Sephardic Jews, while pious in religious matters, could not be absorbed into their synagogue life. The story of Rochester's Sephardic Jewish community deserves special mention.

There was great stirring in some quarters of the Jewish community in the spring of 1906. Strange Jews had come to town. About a week before Passover, Mr. Solomon Schifrin, Dr. Landsberg's assistant in the work of the United Jewish Charities, called Mrs. Bernard Rose on the telephone. "Mrs. Rose," he said, "do you know that there are ten Jewish men in one room on Front Street? They can't speak a word except Turkish!" Mrs. Sadie Rose Weilerstein recalls the events vividly and describes them in these, her own words:

An Arabian lace peddler happened to be in Finestone's restaurant next door. Papa drove him in his buggy to Front Street. He found the ten—all young men—stranded. Papa gave them a card. He told them all to come to his house. The next day instead of ten, eleven came. Mama looked them over. She got busy on the phone, got clothes, suits and money. Then Mama got places for them for the Passover holiday.

Even before Passover, Mama got three of the men work, helping

with matzah. Papa hired one—Todros. During the week of Passover Mama got work for the rest, mostly at Bausch and Lomb, three or four at Michaels-Stern. The Hacham (rabbi) and a few others got work with no work on the Sabbath.⁶⁶

With the coming of these men another stream of Jews began to arrive in Rochester. Although they adhered to the traditional in religious matters, their special customs, language, and national origin, marked them off as a group distinct even from the Russian and Polish Jews. These were Sephardic Jews, who came from Monastir in Serbia, then a part of the Turkish Empire, now within the borders of Yugoslavia. They spoke Turkish, in addition to a jargon, Judeo-Spanish or Ladino, common to most Mediterranean Jews. Apparently, these first members of the Sephardic group came to Rochester because someone here had vouched for them and thus they were able to pass through the Immigration Service.

For three or four years their community consisted only of men. They boarded in various homes in the Joseph Avenue section. During this time they organized a small religious-philanthropic society which met for informal worship and also established a group fund to send aid to their families overseas. Among these first arrivals were David Albahari, Jacob Pesso, Samuel Levi, Moshe Rousso, and Rafael Testa. They helped lead the services and were most active in the group's efforts to establish their own community program. At first most of the men were employed as tailors, many of them in the small shops that lined Hanover and Kelly streets. After several years they sent for their wives and families. In 1910, they organized the "Sephardic Community of Rochester," an organization which conducted the affairs of the Light of Israel of Monastir Congregation. Their first rabbi, or, as they called him, the *hacham*, was Mayer Cassorla, who, like several of those who followed him, also worked in the tailor shops. Until 1925, three other rabbis served them,—Mayer Elias, Isaac Algazi, and Abraham Gabai. Throughout most of this period Jacob Calderon served as their president.

Services, of course, were conducted according to the Sephardic customs and Hebrew was pronounced in the Sephardic dialect. They, themselves, had a strong in-group feeling. In those early days, outmarriage with Russian, Polish, or German Jews was frowned

upon. When in 1916, the first Sephardic Jew married out of his community, choosing a girl of Russian-Jewish extraction, there was a great commotion among the Sephardim.⁶⁷ Not until four years later was such an event repeated.

This strong inner group sentiment made it necessary for these Sephardic Jews to organize their own group activities, separate and distinct from all other Jewish organizations. Thus, in addition to the Light of Israel Congregation, in 1916, they established the Sephardic Alliance, which was a social and cultural center, patterned along the lines of the J.Y.M.A. Later this group was incorporated as the Young Men's Sephardic Association of Rochester and set up its own clubhouse.⁶⁸

While most of the early arrivals worked as tailors, as the years went on, others became small shop owners, grocers, and vegetable and fruit dealers. In 1925 they had not yet begun to move out of the neighborhood of their first settlement. They were concentrated in the East European Jewish section, living on Kelly, Nassau, Vienna, and Thomas streets, in the Joseph Avenue area. It was not until ten years later that a few of the businessmen began to move to the northeastern parts of the city. By that time, however, outmarriage was already a much more common thing and the solidarity of the Sephardic community was showing signs of weakening.

While most of the first settlers still maintained their own rituals, their own synagogue, and interred their dear ones in their own cemetery plot, the younger, American-born group was being absorbed into the total Jewish community.⁶⁹ Here again the process of Americanization was taking place within the Jewish community. America not only served as a melting pot for the various nationalities, but also helped level differences within each of these groups.⁷⁰

16

REFORM RELIGIOUS LIFE

"ETTENHEIMER's *minyan*," the handful of traditional German Jewish worshipers, had discontinued its services about 1892. That "congregation" was to be the last defection from Temple Berith Kodesh. The Reform community was no longer threatened by strong inner dissensions. Berith Kodesh was the oldest, indeed the most stable Jewish congregation in Rochester. Yet by 1925 the population increase of East European Jews had become so large that the German community was completely outnumbered. Its congregation, still the only Reform group in the city, was no longer the major Jewish religious spokesman it had been in the nineteenth century.

Dr. Max Landsberg had retired. He was designated Rabbi Emeritus in 1915.¹ Ten years earlier his temple, which about that time changed the spelling of its name from Berith Kodesh to B'rith Kodesh, had asked Rabbi Max Moll to resign.² The congregation was seeking a younger man to serve as assistant rabbi. They entered into negotiations with a local graduate of the Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Samuel Goldenson, and unanimously voted to engage him at a salary of \$2,000 per annum. However, nothing came of this invitation. It was not until the summer of 1907 that a new assistant accepted a call to Temple B'rith Kodesh. He was Rabbi Felix A. Levy, who was urged to come to Rochester by his friend Rabbi Nathan Blechman, who was just leaving Orthodox Beth Israel.³ Apparently Rabbi Levy, who was extremely friendly with people of the East European community, was not considered suitable for B'rith Kodesh, in the eyes of its trustees; he remained in Rochester for less than a year.⁴ Rabbi Nathan Krass was elected

assistant rabbi in his place.⁵ He, too, remained in Rochester for only a year, resigning at the end of that time.⁶ By a strange coincidence both Rabbi Krass and Rabbi Goldenson later became spiritual leaders of New York's vaunted Temple Emanu-el.

The following spring the congregation had arranged a reception to celebrate Dr. Max Landsberg's fortieth anniversary as rabbi of the temple. A purse of \$2,580 was raised by the members of the congregation and presented to him and his wife.⁷ It was nearing the time when he would relinquish his role as the leader of B'rith Kodesh.

By the turn of the century B'rith Kodesh had a membership of more than 270 families.⁸ The problem of Sunday services, agitated for seven years by the editors of the now defunct *Jewish Tidings*, was raised again at the end of 1899. The Board of Directors had authorized the institution of a Sunday service at that time. However, this was still a supplementary service, since the Friday evening and Saturday morning ritual were also continued. But, it was not long before Dr. Landsberg's doubts voiced some years before, proved to be well founded. He had objected to instituting a supplementary Sunday service because "the attendance at our Friday night services gives you a fair estimate of the number we should muster at a supplementary Sunday service."⁹ In the winter of 1901, the Board voted unanimously to discontinue Sunday services because of lack of satisfactory attendance.¹⁰

Interest in the religious service was indeed waning. Repeatedly the trustees discussed the advisability of discontinuing one or another of the services; some were in favor of abolishing the Friday evening service, others the Saturday service, still others the Sunday morning lecture service.¹¹ This issue was high on the congregational agenda for more than a decade.¹² Finally in November, 1911, a congregational vote was taken to decide whether to have only a Sunday service or only a Saturday service, or both. Pressure was still strong for the retaining of the Saturday service. The matter of a Sunday service with a lecture and music was referred to the Board for action. The Board acted favorably and Sunday services then became a regular feature of the congregational program.¹³ This still did not solve the problem of poor attendance. A year later the Board of Trustees took the matter into its own hands. It favored

retention of the Sunday service as the major service of the week and voted to abolish the Friday evening service. It ordered that "notices be written to the entire congregation at once, and also that the Rabbis of the congregation be notified that no longer would there be any Friday evening services."¹⁴ While this pattern was to continue for some decades, it apparently proved to be no panacea. In 1913, the trustees appointed a special committee to study "the lack of interest in the religious life of the congregation."¹⁵

This religious indifference was undoubtedly a strong factor in the further attempts at changing the few traditional habits which still remained in the congregational program. A committee recommended that the minor holidays be celebrated on the nearest Sunday to such holidays with the exception of the New Year, the Day of Atonement, Passover and *Shavuoth*.¹⁶ The Bar Mitzvah ceremony had long been abolished. Hebrew was more and more passing out of the ritual. Dr. Landsberg was officiating at weddings involving intermarriage, with the approval of his Board of Trustees, who decreed him "to be the sole judge as to his own actions."¹⁷ The radical reform of Landsberg's earlier ministry had continued its extreme path. In the latter years of his tenure, however, religious apathy had become so pronounced that his congregation lacked any semblance of the zeal and devotion which had characterized its earlier period. Loyalties to Judaism and the congregation itself had not flowered from this adventure in radical reform.

However, their earlier pride in interfaith activities remained as strong as before. The annual interfaith Thanksgiving Service held jointly with several Christian congregations was continued. From time to time they exhibited their interest in good will by making their facilities available to several churches. When, in 1901, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation could not use its own quarters, B'rith Kodesh made their hall available to its members for their services.¹⁸ In 1907 the First Universalist Society asked the congregation for permission to use its sanctuary on Sunday mornings. B'rith Kodesh was happy to extend this courtesy.¹⁹ A year later when the minister of that congregation, Dr. Saxe, died, his people petitioned the temple and were granted permission to conduct his funeral in the B'rith Kodesh hall.²⁰

This tolerant understanding was repaid in kind when the Great

Fire consumed the temple. The trustees recorded that "at about noon of April 13, 1909, our Temple was on fire from the sparks being carried over it by the high wind from the Palmer Building fire, corner Main Street and Gibbs Street. The Temple was a complete loss."²¹ A special meeting of the trustees was called that very day. Louis Stein offered the use of his home at 50 Gibbs Street for assembly and Sunday School purposes and the offer was accepted with thanks. The secretary was also instructed to communicate the gratitude of the congregation to the governing bodies of the First Universalist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation, the Asbury Methodist Church, the Lake Avenue Baptist Church, the Second Baptist Church, the First Baptist Church, the Third Presbyterian Church, the Central Presbyterian Church, and the Brick Presbyterian Church. All of these congregations had communicated their desire that B'rith Kodesh use their churches as a place of worship during the emergency following the destruction of the temple. The invitation of the Unitarian Church was accepted, undoubtedly because of the close ties it had with the temple over the years. Another letter of thanks was written to the Reverend C. C. Albertson of the Central Presbyterian Church, who was personally very helpful in removing some of the sacred objects in the temple in the midst of the raging fire.²² Almost immediately plans were laid for rebuilding the synagogue. In the interim, services were conducted at the Unitarian Church; the Sunday School was housed in Mr. Stein's home and a number of the larger meetings took place in the Universalist Church. The new temple was completed and dedicated in record time, by October, 1910.²³

The spirit of interfaith good will was evident at a special service which took place in December, 1920. Rabbi Wolf joined with Dr. Dr. Elijah A. Handley, pastor of the First Baptist Church, in the latter's congregation on Fitzhugh Street. A newspaper reported that more than 1,200 people came to the service and "at least that many went home when they realized that they could not get inside the building." Dr. Handley discussed the Old Testament, while Rabbi Wolf spoke on the New Testament. Dr. Rush Rhees, president of the University of Rochester, presided at the service, which had for its subject "The Great Agreements of Judaism and Christianity." The newspaper went on to claim for this service an outstanding

function. "The service," it said, "will long stand as a beacon light in religious matters in Rochester. It is probably the first time that representatives of the two great faiths got together and shoulder to shoulder bowed their heads to receive the benediction."²⁴

This, of course, was something of an overstatement. Interfaith services had been held by the Jewish and Christian congregations in Rochester as early as 1872. However, it does point up the welcome response such events received in the wider community. Members of B'rith Kodesh, of course, were pleased that their congregation played this role in the city.

Rabbi Horace J. Wolf, who represented the congregation on this occasion, was now its senior rabbi. He had come to B'rith Kodesh as assistant rabbi, in the fall of 1910, from a congregation in Lafayette, Indiana.²⁵ He found a pulpit rich in the tradition of community service, radical in its ritual pattern. He also found a congregation of waning religious interest. It was an "old-line" Reform congregation, which prided itself on its radical antecedents. On July 11, 1875, a scant two years after the organization of the Union of American (Hebrew) Congregations, it had already affiliated itself with this new national association of liberal synagogues.²⁶ Through the intervening years it moved further and further away from the traditional Jewish life, and in the process it had also lost contact with the non-German Jewish groups in the city. This was particularly true in the first years of the twentieth century, when the East European group had become numerous enough and strong enough to go along on its own organized strength. By 1910 the chasm of separation was as deep as it was wide.

Into such a divided community Rabbi Wolf came. Dr. Landsberg, while still the senior rabbi, was now less active than he had been. Wolf became, to all intents and purposes, the spokesman of the temple. After surveying the situation he came to the conclusion that the first step toward understanding and tolerance had to be taken by B'rith Kodesh itself. Accordingly, he petitioned his Board of Trustees as follows:

First: That whereas there are many immigrants in the city desirous of instruction of civic duties, that your committee be authorized to organize a Civics Class, which will meet in one of the Sunday School rooms one evening in each week.

Second: That whereas there seems to be a need for a good reading

room and game room in which children of Jewish parents could have access on Saturday and Sunday afternoons under proper supervision, and that your committee be authorized to raise by subscription within the congregation, such funds as shall be necessary to equip properly a reading room and an attractive game room. It is hoped to have the reading room available for members of the Civics Class after their regular sessions.²⁷

Rabbi Wolf had also been making this appeal for some weeks in the pulpit. The Board finally agreed, a year later, to permit the use of the Assembly Hall for these purposes on one evening a week.²⁸ Rabbi Wolf became rabbi of the congregation in 1915, upon the retirement of Dr. Landsberg. From this time on, he asserted himself more and more in behalf of uniting the Reform and Orthodox elements for common community action. For the very first time in their experience, the members of the Orthodox community had reason to feel that the rabbi of Temple B'rith Kodesh was vitally interested in them and that he did not wish to remain coldly aloof and distant.

Wolf infused new life into his congregation as well. He helped to strengthen his Sunday School. Together with Mortimer Adler, chairman of the Sunday School committee, he took note of the fact that there were many children in Rochester "who attend no Sunday School either because their parents are too poor to belong to any Temple, or because the Orthodox synagogues to which they belong make no proper provision for religious education, especially for the girls." The congregation was urged to open its classes to some of their children.²⁹ The trustees agreed to begin the program in the fall of 1914, provided that "at no time should the total number of children in the Sunday School exceed 150." This meant permitting an increase of about sixty to seventy children, since the number in the school is reported as being about eighty to ninety. In the mid-twenties the congregation's membership doubled and the Sunday School enrollment had also grown to twice its former size. Together with the congregation's devoted president, Dr. Sol J. Applebaum, Rabbi Wolf supplied the active leadership; in 1924 their efforts culminated in the building of an annex to house the school and to provide larger meeting space for the expanding temple activities.

Wolf's influence was felt in the broader community, as well. In 1911 he was elected president of the Rochester Association for the Blind. From 1916 until 1924 he served as chairman of the important Social Justice Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In 1917 and 1918 he was granted leaves of absence by the congregation to assist in the religious and welfare work of the Jewish Welfare Board at various military installations.³⁰ In 1921 he served as voluntary field secretary for the Joint Distribution Committee. Two years later he was honored with the office of vice-president of the New York State Conference of Charities and Corrections. In 1924 he was elected president of the Rochester City Club, a signal honor for a Jewish clergyman.

However, untimely sickness weakened him and he soon found it necessary to curtail some of his ardent labors. One of his proudest achievements, he felt, and a lasting contribution of his ministry, was the merger, in 1924, between the Reform and the Orthodox charities to form the Jewish Welfare Council. Rabbi Wolf had played a most significant role in the whole process of reconciliation, and as a token of esteem was elected vice-president of the newly formed organization. When he passed away, amidst widespread mourning in 1927, a eulogizer said:

Our orthodox friends trusted him with their interests, they felt that he properly understood their viewpoints.

. . . He said that one of the happiest moments of his life was when, in March, 1924, on the eve of his departure to Europe, the merger of our two philanthropic societies into the Jewish Welfare Council, was accomplished. He deplored the existence of our two orphan homes. Again and again he initiated efforts to bring about a merger of these institutions.³¹

Horace Wolf's death marked the close of a period in the history of Temple B'rith Kodesh. When he first came he found a lifeless, uninterested congregation, which held itself aloof from the broader Jewish community. By 1925, under his leadership, it was evolving into a new kind of congregation. More and more of his members were recruited, for the first time, from the families of the East European community. Fewer and fewer animosities and suspicions were nurtured in both the German and the Orthodox group. Horace J. Wolf, it is fair to say, through his labors in his own congrega-

tion, by his ardent interest in the work of the "J.Y.," and as a result of his warmth, interest, and understanding, was one of the fathers of Rochester's modern Jewish community. That community was diverse, but it had greater cohesion than before. It was beginning to recognize pluralism and differentiation as the keystone of the structure of unity.

By 1925 B'rith Kodesh, too, had evolved out of its more recent isolationism. This new road it continued in the next quarter century under the influence of its new spiritual leader, Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein. He was born in Rochester, in 1901, of East European Orthodox parents. It is doubtful if he could have become senior rabbi of B'rith Kodesh had he lived twenty-five years earlier. This in itself supplies an interesting commentary to the changed atmosphere of the Rochester Jewish community of 1925.

Indeed, the "Age of Congregations" had now arrived. There was a better understanding between the Orthodox and the Reform groups. Nevertheless, the synagogue had, by this time, become a weaker link in the chain of community life. Within the East European community the multiplicity of congregations made each of them less effective as community spokesmen. On the other hand, within the German community, a lone congregation proved incapable of serving all Jewish needs. For a stronger instrument of unity one must go beyond the synagogues. Other Jewish agencies and movements now came upon the scene to play this role.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE: 1900-1925

IN 1906 a printed circular was distributed in Rochester among the younger men of the community. It read:

Y.M.J.A.

We beg the pleasure of announcing that an organization of Jewish Young Men is in progress, for the purpose of improving the existing conditions.

The present prospects of the Jewish Young Man are not very bright, as he received some religious instruction during his childhood days, then drifts out into the world, never hearing another word of Religion or Moral Rights, but is obliged to face the temptations that are offered.

This organization, when established, will give opportunities for the proper development of the Jewish Young Man.

Attractions such as a Gymnasium, Bowling and other Modern Entertainment will be strong inducements to gain their support.

Regular meetings will be held for the purpose of elevating our religion, that will result in an increase of spirit.

The kind favor of your respected advice, on this important mission would be appreciated by the Temporary Committee.

Alfred Hart, *Chairman*¹

“Existing conditions” and the not very bright “present prospects” were again the result of the large infiltration of young immigrants who had need of decent social and recreational facilities. There had been a number of groups which attempted to afford the young men and women a social outlet. From time to time the Upright Social Club, The Chesterfields, the Pastime Club, the Upper Ten Social Club, the Young Ladies Hebrew Social Club, and

the Young People's Benefit Circle, meeting in various halls, had served some such function.²

The Judean Club, then eleven years old, had been the most significant of these groups. But what was now needed was a building with larger quarters to serve the needs of the tremendous influx of newcomers. Facing up to the challenge, the members of the Judean Club decided to reorganize. They changed their name to the Young Men's Jewish Association and sought broader support in the community. Their efforts met with success when Philip Present offered to give them \$1,000 toward the purchase of a building at 3 Franklin Square. In 1907 they were able to open their home at that address, after they had incorporated as the Jewish Young Men's Association.³ Philip Present was elected president and he was supported by Haskell H. Marks as vice-president, Alfred Hart as general secretary, Solomon Aiole as financial secretary, and Bernard Rose as treasurer. In the eighteen-room building a variety of social, cultural, and recreational activities were conducted. The several hundred volume library of the old Judean Club was transferred to the "J.Y.," as the organization was popularly known. That same year, a girl's auxiliary, later known as the Jewish Young Women's Association, was formed.⁴

By 1912, after only five years of activity, it was found that more space for additional programs was required. That year a new structure was erected housing a combined auditorium and gymnasium and a small pool; this was built at a cost of \$10,000.⁵ With the growth in numbers of the Jewish community the "J.Y." continued to grow. Its social activities included Sunday afternoon gatherings and dances with an attendance of approximately two hundred. The gymnasium was used in the afternoons by the junior boys and in the evenings by members of the association, excepting on Monday nights, which were given over to women. Basketball was fast becoming a favorite indoor activity and the J.Y. leagues were among the most active groups in the city. The "Centrals," referred to as the "Jewish quintet," represented the J.Y. most successfully.⁶ There tended to be stronger emphasis upon these social and physical activities, although there were occasionally debating contests, dramatic performances, Friday Night forums, and a small class in Jewish history. The club program for teen-agers centered primarily

about the Young Judea groups, which in the 1920s were large and active.⁷ To coordinate this growing network of undertakings it became necessary, in 1920, to secure professional direction. Tobias Roth was engaged as Executive Secretary at that time and under his guidance the work of the association made even greater strides.

While the "J.Y." by 1922 boasted 500 dues-paying members and aspired to become the Jewish Center of Rochester, it was still far from being that. Almost a dozen leading Jewish organizations were still meeting at the Baden Street building of the Associated Hebrew Charities. A few met at Temple B'rith Kodesh and Temple Beth El and some at the Odd Fellows and Nathanson halls. The Zionist groups met at the B'nai Zion Hebrew Library. The "Hebrew Library" was more than its name implied. It had been started in 1901 by Marcus Kahn, in four rooms leased over a bakery at Chatham and Baden streets. Of the four rooms one was set aside as a meeting room for various Jewish organizations. A few years later the Library moved to 14 Chatham Street, where it took the name of Chevrah Bnai-Zion and Hebrew Library. In 1916 it moved to a building at 52 Chatham Street. While the Library had a membership of 350 people, it came to attract many nonmembers. In its renovated frame residence at the last-named address it had the use of an auditorium (with a seating capacity of 150), plus six rooms. There was a circulating library of Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, and German books. On the High Holy Days religious services were conducted there by veteran Zionists and Hebraic-minded Jews who enjoyed being together on those sacred days.⁸

Yet neither the Hebrew Library nor the Associated Hebrew Charities building had as wide an influence as the "J.Y." While the community was still too diverse and too diffuse in interest and background to have a single Jewish Center, of all the groups, the "J.Y." stood out as the most important unifying agent. It was at the "J.Y." that younger men of both German and East European extraction came together on common ground. In the late 1880s, it will be remembered, the sons of the German immigrants had tried to establish a similar organization. The Young Men's Jewish Association, as they called it, was short-lived. The "J.Y.," however, was the product of the twentieth century and of different circumstances. This organization was initiated by the younger members of the

East European group. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the failure of the nineteenth-century Y.M.J.A. was the patronizing air of its members. The young boys from Russian and Polish homes distrusted the motives of its sponsors. It was too early in the community history for the many group suspicions to be easily erased. The "J.Y." on the other hand, benefited from the accrued experiences of living together. It also came upon the scene at a time when East Europeans had begun to outnumber the German group, and there was no longer any fear of their being engulfed or absorbed by the Germans. These and other factors made the "J.Y." the major community bridge between the East European and German sections.

The World War, in 1917, created another opportunity for co-operation between the various elements of the Jewish community. Rochester was one of the first communities in the country to organize itself in behalf of Jewish servicemen. One month after war was declared, in May, 1917, the Jewish Military Welfare Society of Rochester was organized. It undertook to arrange farewell celebrations for men who had enlisted or who were drafted. In addition, it planned to collate statistics of the participation of the Rochester's Jews in the war, as well as to provide for the extra-military needs of the Jewish men in the camps. The Military Welfare Society was organized along total community lines, since the fullest representation of all Jewish organization was sought. Among those who participated were the Council of Jewish Women, the J.Y., Temple B'rith Kodesh, Temple Beth El, Beth Israel Congregation, B'rith Abraham Lodge, Free Sons of Israel, B'nai B'rith, the Hebrew Free Library, the Rochester Zionists' Society, and the Flower City Lodge of the Masonic Order.⁹ Rabbi Wolf was elected president of the Society.

In May, 1918, the Society voted to affiliate formally with the National Jewish Welfare Board and to constitute itself as the Rochester Branch of that organization. The work of the group had been so enlarged that a paid secretary was engaged. Moreover, several volunteers assumed the responsibility of acting as field secretaries for the National Jewish Welfare Board. Rabbi Wolf was supported in these efforts by Isaac Adler and Henry W. Stern.

Up to May, 1918, the Rochester Branch arranged for five fare-

well entertainments. These receptions, it was said, "created a profound impression on the community and were always well attended."¹⁰ The last of these was held on November 10, 1918, on the eve of the Armistice and the occasion was transformed into a victory celebration. The J.Y. building was made available to all the men in uniform who were in the area. More than 500 people were said to have attended.

The "J.Y." thus became an even greater instrument of community unity as a result of the war work of the local branch of the Jewish Welfare Board. In addition to its regular social and cultural activities, the pressure of the war made it into a serviceman's agency. In this effort, again, it transcended the usual divisions that existed within the Jewish community.

Education, too, whether of Jewish or general nature, became an instrument of unity. In 1912, after a survey had indicated that a large number of young Jewish girls were not receiving any religious training, the Council of Jewish Women, composed principally of Reform women, inaugurated its first Sunday School. Mrs. Henry Samuelsohn headed the Religious School Committee. Care was taken to prepare a curriculum that would be acceptable to the Orthodox group. As a so-called secular organization, the Council of Jewish Women was in a good position to act as an intermediary between the Reform and Orthodox religious segments. No tuition was charged. More than fifty children, mostly girls, enrolled in the first sessions, which were held at the "J.Y." building on Franklin Square. The following year a second Sunday School was opened by the Council. This unit met at the building of the Jewish Home for the Aged on St. Paul Street, where more than sixty children were given free religious instruction. This group continued successfully for three years. In 1925 Beth Jehudah Center erected its synagogue next door, and instituted a daily Hebrew school and a Sunday School. It was, however, considered unwise for two Jewish schools to operate next door to each other. The Council, therefore, turned over to the Beth Jehudah Center, which was apparently eager to have it, the St. Paul Street Sunday School, consisting of seventy-four children, four teachers, and an established system of study. A third Sunday School was established by the Council the year before, in 1924, when, at the earnest request of a number of

Jewish women who resided in the less central, west side of the city, a class was organized which met at the Genesee Orphan's Home.

Symbolic of the unifying function performed by these Council Sunday Schools was the request in 1925 by a group of girls who had been at the "J.Y." school since its inception that they be confirmed. The following year a number of these girls from Orthodox homes were confirmed by Rabbi Horace J. Wolf at Temple B'rith Kodesh along with his own congregation's Confirmation Class. This was a new departure in the community and something that obviously could not have taken place two decades earlier.¹¹

The educational programs of the general community were, of course, invaluable media for the acculturation of the Jewish immigrant community. A most forward-looking activity was launched in 1907, when the city undertook to sponsor neighborhood activities in the public school buildings. Edward J. Ward was brought to Rochester and was placed in charge of this program in a half-dozen schools. Soon several thousand people, many of them children of East European Jewish immigrants, participated in the activities of these Social Centers, which offered programs that included clubs, forums, and dances. This use of the public school buildings was so unusual that the Rochester Social Center movement soon attracted nation-wide attention. In 1911, however, the program was terminated after the city had cut and then eliminated its special appropriation. "Rochester," explains its able City Historian, "was not ready for the democratic self-criticism which burst forth in several of the adult forums. A convenient excuse for terminating the program was found by the authorities when a Sunday afternoon dance staged by a Jewish girls' group in one of the school centers aroused a storm of protests."¹² In any case, during the four years of its existence the Social Center was a potent force for good, bringing the immigrant Jewish youth into contact with the thought, culture, and social manners of fellow immigrants.

Two other institutions provided the immigrant Jew and his children with instruction and guidance in their new environment. The first of these was the Baden Street Settlement, which will be discussed at greater length in the pages that follow. But the five evening schools which the Rochester Board of Education conducted were also important instruments of Americanization. In School

Number 9, in 1922, 50 percent of the registration was Jewish, while in School Number 18 Jewish students represented about 25 percent of the enrollment. The instruction offered was mainly in "English-to-foreigners," citizenship, and several elementary subjects. Three nights a week, several hundred Jewish people attended these schools.¹⁸ A great number of men and women who later had successful careers in the Rochester community, attended these evening school classes sponsored by the Board of Education.

Socially and culturally the lives of East European families had changed. By 1925, not only had many of their young people graduated from East High School, where most of them had studied, but more and more of them were enrolled in the local university or in one out of town. They were a part of American life and were integrated into the total environment. This process of Americanization had telling effects upon the future of the Jewish community. Old prejudices which their parents harbored against the Reform community were for the younger, American-educated group no longer either real or vital. "Intermarriage" between these groups was becoming more and more common. And in their outlook upon the general American community the effect of their education was apparent. This was "their own, their native land." America was not foreign to them, nor were they foreign to it.

The Reform group, meanwhile, was developing a new social institution. What the town club, the Eureka Club, had been to the nineteenth century, the Irondequoit Country Club became for the twentieth century. The list of early members of the Irondequoit Country Club is, in large measure, a repetition of the family names of those who were active in the older club. The majority of the founders of the Country Club were Rochester-born children of early settlers. For the most part, they were the products of families who were proud of their radical religious views, people who considered themselves thoroughly at home in the American environment. Nevertheless, it is highly significant that even after a family tradition in Rochester had been built for almost seventy years, so large and influential a group found it necessary to organize a *Jewish* Country Club. To be sure, intrinsically there was nothing Jewish about the Club, except that all of its members were Jews!

This situation sheds a searching light upon the entire question

of assimilation. We will note, later, in detail, the opposition to Zionism on the part of the local Reform group, who objected to Zionism on the grounds that Judaism was a religion and not a nationality, that America was their homeland and not Zion. This would seem to suggest that in all matters save ritual and theology they comported themselves as Americans, with little concern for "Jewishness" or Judaism. Yet, they had organized special Jewish philanthropic and welfare agencies distinct from other elements in the general community. What is more, the very pillars of that Jewish segment, the captains of local industry, the leading lights in the business world, felt it necessary to organize a country club which was virtually all Jewish. Thus even by 1916, when the Irondequoit Country Club was incorporated, first and second generation Americans of German-Jewish extraction were still not moving in the same social circles as their fellow Americans. To be sure, there were a scarce few who had been accepted as members of the swank Genesee Valley Club.

By June, 1917, the Club reported a total membership of one hundred. But of this number probably only one or two were of East European origin. The results of the exclusion pattern were clearly visible. Even as the German-Jewish families had not yet been accepted as a group into the wider Rochester society, so did they keep their social distance from the East European Jews. In both the non-Jewish and the Jewish social worlds there were, of course, several exceptions. The pattern was clear, nevertheless.¹⁴

Not long after the incorporation meeting, the founding group purchased a tract of land on East Avenue with a four-hundred-foot frontage; it was a mile deep and covered 112 acres. The land was acquired for \$25,000,¹⁵ and in a few weeks plans were drawn up for a clubhouse which was to cost about \$45,000. The club site was in the rolling green acres in the neighboring village of Pittsford. The movement of the more affluent Jews had consistently been eastward and the club was purposely located in the general direction of this movement. Interest in a country club rather than in a town club is typical of the growing tendency toward suburbanization which had begun to manifest itself in the general community. Golf and tennis, too, were associated more and more with the leisure-time activities of the successful business man. A country

club provided tired business executives with a retreat from the city, a kind of sophisticated and studied "return to nature." Perhaps that is why they chose the name Irondequoit.

Elmer Adler explained that:

Irondequoit was the oldest Indian name in use in this vicinity . . . it meant a place to turn in . . . it was the name given by the Indians to Irondequoit Bay as the place where they turned in to rest on their trips up and down the lakes . . . in his judgment the name was not only peculiar to this section but specifically desirable and appropriate.¹⁶

The Country Club was opened in September, 1918, and members were informed that they would "be able to use the golf course continuously thereafter."¹⁷ Those proposed for membership were asked to pay an initiation fee of one hundred dollars plus annual dues of a like sum. The Club was strictly a membership organization, though, of course, members might bring occasional guests. However, a great deal of the supposed satisfaction in joining derived from the "exclusiveness" of club membership. Although in a later period the Country Club was used for purposes beyond the sheer entertainment of its own members, in its early days it enjoyed a "splendid isolation." When the Rochester Council of Jewish Women petitioned the Club for use of its facilities in 1920, the request was turned down, despite the fact that a number of club-women were also active in that organization. The members of the Board of Governors apparently were not anxious to turn their facilities into a meeting place for Jewish organizations.¹⁸

The growing rapprochement between the German and East European communities, which by 1925 had reached an advanced stage in other areas, was not yet discernible in the activities of the Country Club. The membership was still most predominantly of German background. Jews of Russian or Polish descent may occasionally have come to the Club as guests but no more than a mere handful of this group were members. Socially there was still a tremendous gap between the wealthier German Jews and their East European coreligionists. This was not purely a question of "class distinction"—it was a matter of social distance. This is evidenced by the fact that the group of East Europeans who, by this time, had themselves become affluent were still not invited into membership.

For other members of the Reform community, Temple B'rith Kodesh came to play some role in their social life. The Men's Club of the temple, organized in 1911 at the suggestion of Rabbi Horace J. Wolf, provided a social organization for the men of the congregation. Meetings were held once a month except in summer. In time these became dinner meetings and the wives of the members were invited to join the men, to listen to their nationally known guest speakers. The women themselves had found the work of their Temple Sisterhood rewarding. In addition to the Sisterhood's activity in behalf of the congregation, it also supplied the women with opportunities for social expression.

The Yiddish-speaking population had a source of entertainment and recreation all its own. In the early 1900s Yiddish stock companies began to present stage plays at Germania Hall. Then, in 1910, Max Fogel brought New York road companies to the local Lyceum, Baker, and Shubert theaters. These featured such renowned Yiddish actors as Jacob Adler, David Kessler, and Boris Tomashevsky. In the years that followed, until the time of the First World War, Fogel arranged to bring a Toronto stock company to the Rochester Yiddish playgoers.

The Yiddish play had a large following in Rochester even after the war, when for many years Morris Fogel brought traveling companies to the Lyceum Theater. This source of entertainment and culture continued to be an important part of the life of the Yiddish-speaking group until the great depression of 1929. Then the Yiddish stage in Rochester declined so drastically that it never regained its earlier strength. For the East European group Yiddish theater was an outlet unknown to the Reform community. In the years that followed it became unknown even to the children of the East European community.

There were, of course, many social patterns and habits which the German group shared with the other members of the Jewish community. The lovely parks of the city were attractive places to visit on Sunday afternoons and holidays and family picnics were becoming more and more popular. Schuetzen Park was a favorite spot. Sea Breeze and other cottage colonies on the shore of adjacent Lake Ontario became increasingly popular bathing resorts in the summer months. Some of the wealthier took vacation trips to more

distant places. In the twenties it was not uncommon for families to travel to Europe on one of the luxury liners then plying the Atlantic.

More and more of the young people were attending colleges and universities. At the local University of Rochester there were enough Jewish young men for the establishment of a fraternity, Kappa Nu, in November, 1911. The small group of founders included Joshua Bernhardt, Louis R. Gottlieb, Joseph A. Lazarus, Morris Lazerson, Harold R. Leve, and Abram J. Levy. By 1925 it had become a national fraternity with local chapters in more than ten leading universities. The previous year, Garson Meyer, son of local East European parents, was elected national president, a position he was to retain for twenty-four more years. While Kappa Nu was typical of the average college fraternity, it did, however, serve as another instrument for the welding together of local Jewish young men who were products of different family backgrounds.¹⁹

It was from these younger people in both segments, the German as well as the East European, that a more homogeneous community did arise. The melting pot was seething, and a new America was being fashioned. And in this process a new Jewish community was in the making. For the first time in its history it gave promise of being an *American* Jewish community.

Politics served as still another medium of Americanization. The Seventh and Eighth wards, heavily populated by Jews, had most often been represented in the Rochester Common Council and the Monroe County Board of Supervisors by members of this community. In the nineteenth century, German Jews had held these offices. Their numerical superiority coupled with their growing Americanization brought East European Jews into these very same positions, as the twentieth century opened.

Throughout the fifty years preceding 1925, Rochester's city government had been largely in the hands of a Republican administration. Only in 1890 and 1891, and again from 1896 through 1899, did the Democrats have local control. This, of course, meant that political success was invariably dependent upon one's membership in the Republican Party. With several notable exceptions, those Jews who did enter politics and who won election were members of that party.

In 1901 Dr. Moses Rosenberg, a German Jew, represented the Seventh Ward as an alderman.²⁰ Abram B. Wolff was elected a supervisor of the Seventh Ward in 1903.²¹ Louis Lazarus, a young attorney of the East European community, was elected a supervisor of the Seventh Ward in 1905.²² Two years later, Saul Carson, a well-known Orthodox leader and an enthusiastic Zionist, won the same position running on the Democratic ticket.²³ In the decade that followed, almost without exception, Jewish leaders of the East European community represented these wards in the Common Council and on the Board of Supervisors. Louis Sarachan, Louis Metzger, Joseph Carson, Israel Schoenberg, Samuel Robinsky, and Morris Rosenberg were among these.²⁴ In 1917, as we have seen, the Jewish workingmen of these two wards succeeded in electing three Jewish Socialists to the city and county government.²⁵ It was, of course, the first and last time this happened. Beginning in 1919, Haskell H. Marks, another prominent Jewish leader, was repeatedly elected to the Common Council as an alderman from the Seventh Ward.²⁶

Rochester's Jews won other political offices as well. Isaac Adler was chosen a member of the Board of Education in 1905 and was reelected by both parties in 1909.²⁷ Louis Lazarus, after serving as Supervisor, was elected for a single term as a member of the New York State Assembly in 1910.²⁸ Simon L. Adler followed him in that office in 1912 and served for many successive terms during the period under discussion.²⁹

By far the most significant political contribution was that made by Meyer Jacobstein. Jacobstein was born in New York city in 1880 and brought by his parents to Rochester two years later. After attending local schools he enrolled in the University of Rochester. He completed his higher education in 1904 at Columbia University, where he remained to take graduate work in economics and political science. In 1907 he was appointed special agent in the Bureau of Corporations, of the Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C. For four years, beginning in 1909, he taught economics at the University of North Dakota as an assistant professor. In 1913 he returned to his adopted city to accept a professorship in economics at the University of Rochester. This post he held for five years, during which time he became active in Jewish affairs. It was not

until 1922 that he earnestly entered the political arena. That November, running on the Democratic ticket, he was elected to the House of Representatives. He was reelected in 1924 and 1926. In 1925 he declined the nomination offered him by the party for the office of mayor of the city of Rochester. When his third term as Congressman was about to expire in 1928, he chose not to run again.³⁰ Jacobstein was one of the products of that circle of sensitive young men of East European Jewish families, who in the 1890s were active in the Boys' Evening Home and the Judean Club. He continued his keen interest in Jewish affairs throughout his adult years in Rochester. In the entire history of Rochester Jewry, he was the only local Jewish man to represent the city in the national legislature. He had not only gained respect for himself, but also shed luster upon the entire Rochester Jewish community.

His most important contribution to American political and economic life was made in a period beyond the scope of this study. It was Jacobstein who first suggested the legislative program to Franklin D. Roosevelt, which came to be known as the "National Industrial Recovery Act."³¹

While, in a sense, Meyer Jacobstein was unusual and therefore not typical of the entire Jewish community, his activities indicate the strides made by the East European Jewish segment in the broader community by 1925. Whereas political leadership was fairly unknown to this group in the previous century, its sons were now taking over where the German Jews had left off. Socially, culturally, and politically, too, they were now a vital part of the American landscape.

This integration, of course, would have been impossible without the important efforts of a number of Jewish organizations devoted to the welfare requirements of the immigrant community. The relief activities of the philanthropic agencies which cared for the physical needs of the thousands of impoverished new arrivals paved the way for their adjustment to the social and cultural environment of America.

PHILANTHROPY AND WELFARE

NEARLY 800 Jews have come to Rochester in the past 3 or 4 months and they cannot find tenements or houses except at very high rents. Six months ago the situation was normal, but so many Jewish refugees from Russia have arrived that the normal Jewish district, between Central Avenue and Clifford Avenue, is crowded to the limit. More than 200 pieces of property have been bought by Jews in this area in the last 6 months, but now demand has exceeded supply and houses that used to rent at \$2.50 a week are bringing \$4 and \$5.¹

IN THIS newspaper paragraph the crisis was portrayed. This was 1907. Immigration waves were surging higher and higher; there seemed to be no end in sight. Not only was the local community concerned about the fate of their persecuted brethren in Russia; it was equally important to assist the refugees upon their arrival in Rochester. Earlier, the East European Jews in Rochester had banded together for this purpose.² In 1898 the Hebrew Ladies Relief Society had held their first six-day fair in Germania Hall. This became an annual event.³ In 1903 a special relief fund was established to assist the sufferers of the Kishinev pogroms.⁴ On other occasions Jewish actors from New York were brought to Rochester to present benefit performances.⁵

These separate and often sporadic attempts of the East European community to help their people abroad and at home were hardly sufficient to cope with the new situation created by the Russian Revolution of 1905. Jews were streaming into the United States in unprecedented numbers. A new philanthropic instrument needed to be forged. It was out of this necessity that a hitherto unknown unity was achieved.

Local leaders of the immigrant community came to realize that it would be necessary to combine their major relief activities into a single federation. In May, 1908, after months of preliminary discussions, they met to incorporate as the Associated Hebrew Charities.⁶ In a sense, this was a symbol of the independence and the maturity of the East European group. They did not want to rely upon the United Jewish Charities of the German community. Three organizations joined forces: the Talmud Torah, Hachnosas Orchim, and the Hebrew Ladies Relief Society. Their avowed purpose was to relieve "the necessities and suffering of the Jewish poor in the city of Rochester, New York; to provide medical attendance, care and nursing for deserving Jewish poor; to furnish temporary assistance to those in distress . . . to become self-supporting; to provide free Hebrew education to poor Jewish children . . . aid and assistance will be voluntarily given."⁷ The most prominent members of this community were among the first organizers and contributors.⁸ In addition to personal solicitation for contributions, an annual fair held each December at Convention Hall was a major source of income. Thousands of people came to these fairs —Orthodox and Reform Jews, as well as many non-Jews.⁹ Various civic and religious leaders made an annual appearance at these affairs.¹⁰ The acceptance by the community of the work of the Associated Hebrew Charities enabled the association to distribute \$42,000 to its beneficiaries in the first four years of its existence. The idea of a united philanthropic effort had proved its worth.¹¹

Under the leadership of men like Lester Nusbaum, the Charities made such progress that in the summer of 1913 it was able to complete the construction of its own building at 144 Baden Street. Mr. Nusbaum served as president of the organization from its inception and continued in this capacity for many years. This building served as the schoolhouse of the Talmud Torah as well as a meeting center for a number of the clubs and organizations which had previously used private halls.¹² As the work of the association progressed, a number of standing committees were set up. These were divided into General Relief, Medical Aid, Widows and Orphans, Legal Aid, Education, and Hachnosas Orchim.¹³ Each group was subject to the direction of the Board of Directors, yet was given wide latitude in carrying out its specialized program. By 1920 the Associa-

ated Hebrew Charities had become a modern social service agency. Its enlarged program brought about an annual budget four times the size of that for the first year's operation in 1908.¹⁴

More important than its increased budget or services, however, was the unifying strength that it possessed. Its appeal to the immigrant community was universal. It could bring various groups into a single focus: older settlers and new arrivals, boss tailors and piece-workers, Russians and Poles, Rumanians and Galicians, members of the larger as well as the smaller congregations. Economic or religious rivalries had little effect upon its program. Since its major work had humanitarian rather than ideological significance, it enjoyed the cooperation of all elements of the Yiddish-speaking community. The Charities gave all these groups the sense of community on the organizational level that no other institution had afforded.

The pressure of events surrounding the First World War helped bring some of the Jewish groups together. We have seen how the concern for local servicemen brought about some measure of unity through the work of the Jewish Welfare Board. The condition of Jews in war-stricken Eastern Europe was still another emergency. The most intensive Jewish relief work ever to be embarked upon was about to be undertaken. Nationally, the East European group had organized the Central Committee for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, in October, 1914. Within a few weeks a Rochester branch was established, headed by Hyman Goldman, Saul Carson, and Jacob Gordon.¹⁵ The American Jewish Relief Committee, representing the older and more entrenched settlers of the German-Jewish community, was set up in New York city, about this time. In Rochester, Joseph Michaels was made chairman of its local unit. Both committees were united through a sub-committee. Jointly they began a series of collections which averaged a total of \$250 a week. By late 1916 they had sent to Europe over \$20,000 from Rochester Jewry.¹⁶ The left-wing elements and the *landsmann* groups participated in this program through their own organization which they called the People's Committee. This separation was needed, they felt, to make certain that their compatriots in Europe received a fair share of the relief money. Max Fogel served as their chairman.¹⁷

In 1917, as conditions grew worse in Europe, Jewish relief quotas

in America were increased. The People's Committee conducted several public meetings, a Purim masquerade, as well as house-to-house collections. They joined the Central Committee in sponsoring a Yiddish play at the Lyceum Theater to help meet the campaign goal. These groups pushed their efforts with great zeal and fervor.¹⁸ The more sedate group under the leadership of Joseph Michaels conducted an intensive campaign in the winter of 1917. Meetings were held at Convention Hall and the Chamber of Commerce, at which Louis Marshall and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise were the speakers. They set up their campaign headquarters on the third floor of the Chamber of Commerce building. In a few weeks they surpassed their \$60,000 quota by many thousands of dollars. A local newspaper commented that "the campaign in many ways has been one of the most remarkable charitable campaigns which ever has been conducted in Rochester."¹⁹

The special effort for Jewish war sufferers had its helpful effect upon community unity. Yet, there still remained antagonisms which had not yet been obliterated. In local relief work, the East European community desired to "help their own." They did not want to be dependent upon the "scientific" charity of the Reform community. This sentiment supplied a strong motivation for the galvanizing of forces within the group. Through this, their own independent philanthropic agency, they were able to manifest a solidarity vis-a-vis the general community and the German-Jewish organizations. It may have appeared to many outside of their sphere that their work was merely a duplication of the United Jewish Charities. Yet, they defended their association on the grounds that it "understood" the problems of the immigrant at close range, on such matters as kosher food, traditional ritual, and education, in which the Reform United Jewish Charities had neither interest nor concern. This was in many respects true. However, it is clear that as important as were these matters of "special knowledge," the question also turned on the problem of the hegemony and "self-government" of the Orthodox, Yiddish-speaking community. The community united through the Associated Hebrew Charities was not willing to give up its sovereignty to the Reform group.

Time and external pressure brought about a change in this condition. By the 1920s, a number of the children of the East Eu-

ropean group were beginning to affiliate with Temple B'rith Kodesh, under the influence of Rabbi Horace J. Wolf. The J.Y.M.A., as we have seen, had also served as a leveling factor, helping to bridge the gap between the German and the East European segments. But of equal influence was the viewpoint expressed by leading officials of the Rochester Community Chest, organized in 1918. These men could see little reason for having to help subsidize the budgets of both the United Jewish Charities and the Associated Hebrew Charities. This outside pressure of the civic community made the two groups, for the first time, think of combining their efforts.

This was achieved, but the "reconciliation of the sections" was a slow process. This program was subtly nurtured by the election of personnel from the Board of the United Jewish Charities to the Board of the Associated Hebrew Charities. Finally, in 1924, after a warning from the Community Chest, that it could no longer recognize these two separate budgets for subsidy, the two Jewish associations merged into what became known as the Jewish Welfare Council. Samuel Sturman, a member of the traditional group, was elected president of the merged group. He was accepted and respected by both parties.

While for general relief work there was now a united agency representing both the German and East European groups, in practice their suspicions and social separateness had still continued even after the merger. The supposedly merged groups still retained their separate boards and separate activities. The Talmud Torah continued on its own, as did the Hachnosas Orchim. The Bikur Cholim, a personal nursing service which was incorporated in 1915 and later became part of the Hebrew Charities' activities, continued its special program even after the merger.²⁰ Similarly, the United Jewish Charities, because it possessed separate bequests of its own, maintained its own activities on such matters as college tuition scholarships and other special assistances.

The Jewish Welfare Council established its office at 144 Baden Street with a staff of two workers, Miss Anna Wolfe, who had earlier been with the Associated, and Miss Stella Schifrin, who had been with the United. There was no director, and these two women as-

sumed joint responsibility for the social service and administrative functions of the agency. Generally the service was in the nature of financial assistance given to needy individuals and families. Since the staff was small and the case load heavy, a number of volunteer women from various congregational Sisterhoods made special home visits. Members of the Board of Directors, too, were extremely active and assumed many of the administrative responsibilities that were later assigned to a newly created position of Executive Director.²¹ By 1925 relief activities which had projected the Associated Hebrew Charities as the unifying agent of the Orthodox community also served the cause of wider community unity. But comprehensive unity was still a thing of the future.

The Associated Hebrew Charities was the major welfare agency of the East European community, but it was not its only one. Some of the very same leaders who established that organization had the feeling that it was far better to make the new immigrant self-supporting than to merely dole out relief. In June, 1904, they incorporated as the Society of Oavay Chesed, The Rochester Hebrew Free Loan Association.²² Abraham D. Joffe offered \$1,000 as the basis for the capitalization and with this money they set up their work. Joffe was joined by Hyman Goldman in the active leadership of the organization. The society's average loan was \$50, although, by 1925, it did lend as much as \$200 to some individuals. Of course, no interest was charged, but the organization expected to be repaid in three months' time by regular weekly payments. This period was extended in extremely needy cases. Money to enlarge the capitalization was raised at annual banquets, which after 1918 were often held at Temple Beth El. At the peak of its activity, in the 1920s, the society loaned over \$40,000 a year.²³ In addition to Abraham D. Joffe and Hyman Goldman, Joseph Silverstein, Bernard Rose, Albert Goldman, and Isaac Joffe were most active in this Free Loan Society. The success of this group encouraged a number of women, in 1915, to establish a similar organization incorporated as the Hebrew Ladies' Ose Chesed Society of Rochester. The Ose Chesed group was the much smaller of the two and usually financed its capitalization program by means of annual fund-raising picnics.²⁴ While the leading spirits of this association

were a group of women headed by Mrs. Meyer Amdoursky, in the course of time, men also became active. When this happened there was no difference between the two organizations.

In a sense, this is symbolic of a general pattern within the Jewish community. Organizations die hard; they often do not even "fade away." Although organized to serve a purpose which has either been fulfilled by other agencies or become obsolete and no longer necessary, they manage to carry on despite their duplicate efforts. This is perhaps the result of the psychological problems of voluntary leaders whose emotional investment in "their" organizations makes giving up their hold upon the group difficult.²⁵

The growing numbers of the Orthodox community coupled with their increasing emancipation from the support of the German-Jewish group caused a nucleus of men, in 1912, to organize the Jewish Sheltering Home. The Reform-sponsored orphan asylum was considered an unsatisfactory place to send children from traditional homes. Some years later Alfred Hart explained:

Now the question is continually raised why we should have two orphan's homes. Again and again we are obliged to answer: Our Orthodox Jews have tried with every effort but have failed to convince our respected Jews of the Reformed Orphan's Home that our little ones are from Orthodox parents, and though we respect them for their good work, why not raise them as their parents would have done if they lived, with all the sacred customs that were so dear to them.²⁶

This sentiment gives us a clue to the basic division which separated the Reform and Orthodox communities. Thus, in the fall of 1914, two years after its organization, the Jewish Sheltering Home at 27 Gorham Street opened its doors.²⁷ At the Dedication Exercises addresses were delivered by Rabbis Sadowsky, Chertoff, Caplan, and Levin and also by Dr. William J. Bernis (president), Abraham D. Joffe (vice-president), and Hyman Goldman.²⁸ Great enthusiasm was engendered at this affair, large contributions were announced, and the new superintendent of the Home, H. Morganstein of Youngstown, Ohio, was presented.²⁹ A few weeks later, on October 18th, the doors of the Home were opened to six children.³⁰ The institution continued to receive more children with the passage of months. In May, 1919, Jacob Hollander, a native of Jerusalem, and more recently principal of a Binghamton Hebrew School, was

called to the Home as superintendent. Under his devoted paternal care the progress of the organization was steady and continuous. That year two auxiliaries were formed: The Mother's Club, a group of women who undertook to help finance the Hebrew education of the children, and the Big Brothers and Sisters Club, composed of younger men and women. The Big Brothers and Sisters Club established a visiting committee which arranged for young people of the community to entertain the Home's children every Sunday. The Aleph Eien Club, a group of teen-age boys and girls had also been functioning as a younger auxiliary. By 1921 the original building at 27 Gorham Street was outgrown. Additional cottages were added thus making a total of five buildings and enabling the Home to provide adequate accommodations for up to one hundred children. That year, the Board of Directors voted to change the name to The Jewish Children's Home, since many people erroneously believed that older folks were also being cared for.

By that time the Home had cared for 113 children since its organization. Each year the number increased, and by 1925 there were 69 children living there.³¹ In contrast, during that same year only 25 children were cared for at the Reform Genesee Home.³² The number of Rochester children admitted to this Home in the 1920s was perhaps no more than 10. Since this decline in numbers at the Genesee Home was apparent for some years, efforts were made as early as 1917 to amalgamate the Orthodox and Reform units. This approach was the first official attempt on the part of these communities to combine their organizational programs. After two years of negotiation, the Orthodox segment was apparently prepared to join forces, provided the Genesee Home would comply with the regulations of traditional ritual law. The Orthodox demanded that they be allowed to have a person of their own choice supervise the kitchen, plus a constitutional clause guaranteeing *kashruth* forever. The Reform group refused the demand for perpetual *kashruth*, and as a result, a deadlock was reached and the whole plan for amalgamation was dropped.³³

This brief account of the East European effort in the field of child welfare highlights an important aspect of the complex issue of unity within Jewish communal life. Alfred Hart, who served the

Jewish Children's Home as president for twenty years until his untimely death in 1936, touched the nub of the matter when he made much of "all the sacred customs that were so dear to them." The issue of maintaining two separate children's homes was not a matter of duplication. In other areas, as we have seen, socioeconomic reasons, or mere personal rivalries, were often the causes of multiple organizations. Here, however, we encounter a legitimate question of ideological difference, deeply rooted in the life habits of the respective segments. The existence of separate institutions in this field is symbolic of the variety of Jewish philosophies. Each had a valid claim upon its own adherents. While we have noted a number of instances of unnecessary duplication and multiplicity within the community, it is important to distinguish between what might be called legitimate and illegitimate differentiation.

Thought for the welfare of the aged and infirm had reached the planning stage as early as 1910. All the groups affiliated with the Associated Hebrew Charities had associated themselves with this project. It was reported that a Jewish Institute and Home for the Aged and Infirm would be erected at the intersection of Nassau and Joiner streets, in the heart of the Jewish neighborhood. One newspaper indicated that \$10,000 had been pledged in a building campaign conducted for this purpose.³⁴ For a variety of obscure reasons, nothing came of this plan. Perhaps not enough money was actually available. This seems a most likely reason, since a small group of women organized themselves as the Bikur Cholim Society after the 1910 fiasco, and diligently, for eight years, set aside a portion of their funds for the purpose of establishing a Home for the Aged.³⁵ When they had amassed several thousands of dollars they began systematically to prod a number of the leading men to interest them in this project. They faced indifference in a number of quarters, but because of their persistence were able, finally, to create sufficient interest in their project. In 1918, the Jewish Home for the Aged came into being and was incorporated on February 10, 1920. The following January a house was purchased at 1162 St. Paul Street and converted into the Home. A month later it was reported that the first resident "with some difficulty was persuaded to be admitted."³⁶

In the early days of the Home the ladies of the Bikur Cholim

Society helped sponsor the formation of a Daughters' Club, which within a year boasted a membership of some 400 women. These women not only furnished all the dishes, linens, clothing, and furniture in the Home, but also took turns in preparing meals. With their help and under the leadership of Lester Nusbaum, who served as first president of the Home from 1920 to 1943, the organization progressed. In late 1921, additional property at 1180 St. Paul Street was purchased. There was now room for 30 residents, but soon both houses became overcrowded. By December, 1924, an additional wing, which also linked the two houses, was completed.³⁷

The Jewish Home for the Aged stands out as an exception to the patterns previously noted in the Rochester Jewish community. At no time had there been a movement among the local German-Jewish group to set up such an institution. There were probably a number of reasons for this. The problem of poverty among the aged was not nearly so prevalent among the earlier German settlers as it was in the East European community because many of their older people could afford private nursing and sanitaria. The Reform group had few qualms about keeping the special dietary laws, and they would have fewer problems of adjustment if they became residents of public institutions for the aged. In this field of social welfare no active antagonism occurred between the Orthodox and Reform communities. Yet, since the Home was an Orthodox institution, controlled by its Orthodox founders, the German element had evinced very little interest in it. This was to be the state of affairs until a later day when other factors were to bring about greater cooperation between these two sections of the Jewish community.

As a congregation, Temple B'rith Kodesh had been removed from the intimate affairs of the East European Jews, at the turn of the century. Some of its more social-minded members, however, came to be vitally concerned with the need for the "Americanization" of these immigrants and their rapid integration into the Rochester community. In the spring of 1901, a small group of these people got together to make plans for a Social Settlement in Rochester which would fulfill this need. Actually, the idea had its origin in the work of the B'rith Kodesh Sisterhood. Groups of young girls came afternoons and evenings from the northern part of the city

to the Assembly Hall to receive personal instruction in the domestic arts. But after a while this journey uptown at night through the dark streets was considered too dangerous for the girls. Mrs. J. L. Garson offered the suggestion that a settlement house in the girls' own neighborhood would be the best solution to the problem. In a matter of weeks the necessary funds were raised by subscription and a location was chosen. It was decided to find a building in the section of the city north of the railroad, extending from Clinton Avenue to Hudson Avenue.

The first meeting for permanent organization was held on April 23, 1901, with Mrs. Fannie R. Bigelow presiding. This led to the incorporation of the group, shortly thereafter, under the name of the Social Settlement of Rochester. Soon the premises at 152 Baden Street were leased for one year. The first floor of the house was to be used for settlement work, while the rooms on the second floor were reserved as an apartment for the head resident worker. Mrs. Sara Vance Stewart was engaged for this position.

Obviously, this new program filled a strong need. The house on Baden Street was soon looked upon as "the Home." By 1904 an Assembly Hall had been built in the rear of the house. This made possible the organization of activities for boys as well as girls. As the program progressed new activities were added, until the "Home" was sponsoring a wide variety of projects. In addition to the instruction in sewing, cooking, darning, and basketry, there were added a kindergarten, a library, the Penny Provident Fund, the Loan Art Gallery, public baths, a playground, and a music school.

The kindergarten functioned until November, 1913. Here tots too young for the public elementary school were taught kindergarten songs and games. This was a progressive attempt to teach English to these foreign-born children through music. This activity also proved to be a means of bringing the mothers of the children to the Settlement. This promoted a friendly relationship between them and the Settlement workers. It was now easier to teach the mothers important facts about child care. The small music school was still another progressive step. For ten cents a lesson, children were given instruction in a musical instrument, particularly the

piano. Since very few of them had pianos at home, they were permitted to practice on the piano at the Settlement.

The Settlement program was not limited to the activities carried out in its own institution. The officers and directors had a social vision extraordinary for their day. In fact, the Baden Street Settlement was in the vanguard of every forward-looking step in social welfare work in the entire city. It became an active agent for city-wide social reform, particularly through the pages of its publication, *The Bulletin*. In March, 1906, the first copy of this monthly paper appeared. It was originated by Elmer Adler and Harry Michaels. Edwin A. Rumball was the editor. At first it printed news of the Settlement as well as information concerning local activities and items of civic interest. As time passed, it became a kind of "voice in the wilderness," rallying the community to social progress. It was discontinued as a Settlement publication in April, 1910. Thereupon it was reorganized, new people were added to the editorial board, and it became a community publication. It took the name of *The Common Good of Civic and Social Rochester*. *The Common Good*, as it came to be known, began to deal most imaginatively with a wide variety of welfare problems. It was actively engaged in a campaign for milk stations and for stricter city control of sanitary conditions. It was interested in city planning and the health problems of the factory workers. It also beat drums strongly for the Social Center movement in the Public Schools.³⁸

Support for the Social Center movement had been strongly advocated by the directors of the Settlement. When a playground was opened at the newly rebuilt Number 9 School in 1908, it was the result of the efforts put forward by the Settlement. Abram J. Katz had been appointed "a committee of one" to act in the Settlement's behalf to help promote a city-wide acceptance of the Social Center idea. Unfortunately, as we have seen, the Social Center movement was short-lived. It was abolished in 1911 after a brief but most fruitful existence.

For many years the directors of the Settlement had cooperated with a small, inner group of their own which they called the Good Cheer Committee. The group met at the Baden Street House in order to maintain a more intimate relationship with the families

of the neighborhood. They acquainted themselves personally with the exceptional or problem cases in all the departments of the Settlement. Many of the younger sons and daughters, then students at the University of Rochester, served the Settlement as volunteer leaders of clubs. They were more than club leaders in the usual sense. They were personally concerned with the problems of the immigrant community, and they entered into their work with wholehearted interest. Often, they took some of their club members into their own homes and in this way some of the barriers between the groups were destroyed. One most influential and inspiring club leader, in the period of the First World War, was Richard Brickner, who later became an outstanding psychiatrist. Two of the younger boys under his wing, Levi Olan and Sidney Regner, became Reform rabbis.³⁹ Many of these clubs were of a literary nature—a number of the young boys were interested in good reading and in acquiring a knowledge of philosophy. Social theory was often argued late into the night. Socialism as a political and economic idea was then a burning intellectual issue among the youth and many debates and lectures on this and allied subjects were heard at their club meetings.

By 1925 the Settlement was still serving a large number of immigrant Jewish families as part of its community service. However, the character of the neighborhood had greatly changed. While from the beginning the Settlement was a nonsectarian organization, by this time it served a large number of the newer non-Jewish immigrants who had come to that neighborhood. The changes taking place were noted in a twenty-fifth anniversary report, rendered in 1926. Among other things it was indicated that:

. . . When the Settlement was first established and for years afterward the immigrants who settled in the neighborhood, crowding out the earlier German and Irish settlers, were most exclusively Russian and Polish Jews. Slowly but surely these immigrants in the process of assimilation became thrifty citizens and moved elsewhere. And this great homogeneous group is being replaced by a cosmopolitan mixture of Turkish Jews, Ukrainians, Italians, Syrians and Americans, both white and colored. Many of the postwar immigrants are of a high type, intellectually and socially, and give promise of becoming most desirable citizens. On the other hand, there has come into our section of the

city, an undesirable element, both of American and foreign birth, contributing no little to a lowering of the moral status of our neighborhood and to increase in delinquency. This has been a serious problem in our community.⁴⁰

Now, a greater variety of nationalities and religious groups were represented in the program of the Settlement. It was estimated that 44 percent were children of Russian Jews; 13 percent children of Turkish Jews; 14 percent Italian children; and the remaining 29 percent were children of Ukrainian, Syrian, Polish, and German homes.⁴¹

In this same period another revealing estimate of the Rochester Jewish child population was made. While the heaviest concentrations were still in the Seventh and Eighth wards, the figures showed an increasing number of Jewish children in the schools of the eastern and southeastern sections of the city, as well as in the northeastern portions.⁴² It was becoming apparent that centrifugal tendencies were at work. Where there had before been a single Jewish section or center of population, a number of sections and centers were growing up. Earlier, Jewish settlement work, while non-sectarian, was principally motivated by the desire to "integrate" immigrant coreligionists. After 1925 this no longer remained the momentous problem it had been. Efforts in behalf of social welfare were now turned outward to face the newer problems. These problems were now more "civic" than purely "Jewish" in nature.

This situation was clearly reflected in the closing of the Jewish Orphan's Asylum on Genesee Street in the fall of 1928. In its earlier years it had shown remarkable signs of progress and had met an extremely important need in the community. The average attendance was thirty-five to forty children. Girls and boys had separate dormitories. All the children received their general education at Public School Number 20. The Home ministered to the children until the age of sixteen, when they were discharged as "adults."

In 1909 the Board of Trustees decided to build a new orphanage. The old buildings on St. Paul Street had been occupied about twenty-five years. Not only would it have been very costly to remodel them, but the St. Paul Street section, by this time, had changed and was no longer considered suitable. A plot of four acres was purchased on Genesee Street, five minutes walk from Genesee

Valley Park. In 1915 the new orphanage was completed at a cost of \$100,000. Two paid physicians were appointed to the medical staff. The younger children now attended Public School Number 37, while the older group studied at West High School; some went to a vocational school. On Saturday the children attended religious services at Temple B'rith Kodesh and received their religious education at that congregation every Sunday. There were also classes at the Home in dramatics, art, and French.⁴³ Music lessons for children with ability were provided at the Hochstein School of Music.

The problems of this Reform institution were accentuated after 1914 when an Orthodox home was established in Rochester. We have noted the difficulties that developed between the two groups. After the idea of an amalgamation of the organizations was dropped in 1919, the Genesee Home began to develop a program for establishing children in foster homes. In 1923 a worker was engaged to organize a home-finding department, but this, unfortunately, met with little success. In 1925 it was reported that during the preceding three years no children from Rochester were placed in the Home. At the time the Home was caring for six local children in addition to twenty-one from Buffalo and three from Syracuse. It became increasingly obvious that local children from orphaned or broken homes were being sent to the Orthodox Jewish Children's Home. There was hardly any call for these services from within the Reform community. Thus, after close to a half-century of effort in this area of community welfare, a chapter had come to a close. Once again, the social idealism of the German group would have to find new and different outlets. They could not, in good grace, participate in the program of the Orthodox Jewish Children's Home. They would have to find "greener" fields in the civic community.

In a sense, the same fate was reserved for the Reform group's United Jewish Charities. Until 1908, when the Orthodox had formed their separate entity under the name of the Associated Hebrew Charities, it was the dominant philanthropic Jewish agency in Rochester. It is true that it had more than trebled its budget in the period from 1900 to 1923, since it had increased from about \$5,000 to \$18,000 a year.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, during all this period the Associated Hebrew Charities was expanding its program even more rapidly. Thus, while the United Jewish Charities was the older

and more established organization of the two, it gradually came to play a less significant role in the philanthropic work of the community. To be sure, the decline in its scope did not lead it to a merger with the Associated. We have already noted the other, external reasons for this amalgamation in 1924. Yet, as things went, it probably would have been only a matter of time before this Reform instrument, too, would have gradually lost its grip upon the community.

In all of these inner changes of function and control in Jewish welfare and philanthropic work we read again the mighty influence of mass immigration. Rochester's East European Jewish community greatly outnumbered the older German settlers. It took the whole span of these twenty-five years for this numerical superiority to make itself felt in the institutional balance of power. In the earlier part of the period, East European organizations were numerous, but they were new and inexperienced. Moreover, like their members, they were much poorer than the older established Reform institutions. By 1925, the economic picture had been altered. East European Jewish families had a history of as many as fifty years of settled living in Rochester. Some of them were extremely wealthy and large numbers were in comfortable circumstances. Like their German brethren, they had gone through a challenging economic experience. Discarding the peddler's pack, they had worked as artisans in the factories. They had saved some money and soon had gone into business for themselves. Before many years had passed many of them were proprietors of small and large stores, wholesalers, salesmen, and professional men. A goodly number, of course, were part of the working force of the city. Yet by 1925, enough of them had sufficient economic stability to permit them to stand on their own feet as members of a proud community.

It is perhaps true that the development of a united, integrated Jewish community in Rochester had to await just such a situation. A comprehensive and organic community, on the institutional and interpersonal levels could not be achieved unless and until the German and the Russian segments regarded each other as coequals.

THE RISE AND GROWTH OF ZIONISM

"THE Zionist Convention held in Rochester in 1914, had a most vital effect upon my life. It had a profound influence upon a great number of the younger Jewish boys in town." This description comes from the lips of one who later became a prominent Jewish leader in America. The convention proved to be an unforgettable experience for him and a goodly number of his fellow teen-agers in the East European Rochester community.¹

But the ground work in behalf of Zionism had already been laid in the community. The Yiddish-speaking group closely followed the national activities of the Federation of American Zionists. While no official Zionist organization was formed locally, a good deal of interest was shown in the activities of the national organization from its founding in 1897. Yet here the viewpoints of the German and East European groups were in conflict. Dr. Max Landsberg, following the pattern of almost all other American Reform rabbis of the time, declared that a Jewish homeland in Palestine was of little consequence. He called for emancipation,² the granting of equal rights to Jews, as a solution of the Jewish problem. Some storm of protest in the community was soon heard. In 1903 at a meeting of the Rochester Section of the Council of Jewish Women held at Temple B'rith Kodesh, a visiting speaker extolled the aims of Zionism. Dr. Landsberg responded in the negative, espousing his viewpoint of "emancipation and equal rights."³

This attitude toward the Jewish future appeared to the East European group to be a clear step toward the assimilation of the Jewish people.⁴ To be sure, not all persons of the Russian group were Zionists or even sympathetic to Zionism. The Socialist ele-

ment, The Workmen's Circle, and the Bundist group were strongly opposed to what appeared to them to be a purely nationalistic solution of an international problem. Many of the older Orthodox people were extremely wary of the nonreligious implications of Zionism—the establishment of a Jewish homeland through human effort, rather than by divine and messianic means. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the gap on this issue was widest between the German Jews on the one hand and the Russian-Polish group on the other. If many Orthodox Jews refrained from Zionist activity they did believe, nevertheless, in the central role of Palestine in Jewish history and fate. And if the Socialists and radicals sought an international rather than a nationalist solution, they were, nevertheless, closely identified with Jewish folk life and culture. The Reform community, on the other hand, looked upon themselves as American Jews, whose ultimate fate was tied to their native or to their adopted land and not to Zion.

Their point of view is clearly reflected in the stand they took in 1907, when the fires of controversy were raging within the faculty of the Reform seminary in Cincinnati, the Hebrew Union College. The Board of Trustees of Temple B'rith Kodesh unanimously adopted a resolution on this issue and sent it in the form of a letter to Dr. Kaufman Kohler, President of the Hebrew Union College. They declared:

Whereas, it has been called to our attention that certain members of the faculty of the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati are using their positions to further promote what is known as Zionistic propaganda, and are out of harmony with their colleagues on the teaching staff of the college, and

Whereas, we learn that Rev. Dr. Kohler, President of the Hebrew Union College, has and is discouraging such action, and is endeavoring to uphold the policies which have governed the founders of the college,

Resolved, that we deprecate these teachings and this condition and authorize the president of the Board to express to Dr. Kohler our appreciation of the position which he has taken in the matter, and upholding the spirit and the policies which governed the fathers of the college, and we express the hope that he is not permitting the Hebrew Union College, or its name to be connected with what is termed the Zionist movement, but that he will continue to maintain the college

as the center of Jewish learning and a seat of culture for those who are to officiate as the rabbis of American Jewish congregations.⁵

A few weeks later Dr. Kohler expressed his personal thanks for this resolution in a letter to the trustees.⁶

But the condition of Jews in East Europe in those years made the Zionist movement a most attractive one to those immigrants who came from that part of the world. Jacob DeHaas, secretary of the Federation of American Zionists, visited Rochester in January, 1905, and addressed a large gathering of Jews in Colonial Hall. Commenting on his visit a local newspaper reported: "Rochester Jews are not in agreement over this issue. Dr. Max Landsberg disapproves it, favoring assimilation. Some think only a separate national home will satisfy."⁷

Yet DeHaas' visit succeeded in bringing together a number of like-minded people into the first official Zionist group in Rochester. That winter they conducted a number of meetings. In June they sent Rabbi David Ginsberg, Saul Carson, Haskell Marks, and Ellis Mittenthal to the national Zionist convention in Philadelphia.⁸ By late fall several other Zionist groups had been formed: The Daughters of Zion, the Ladies' Zion Endeavor, and the Theodore Herzl Zion Club. These units joined together to sponsor a fair at Germania Hall, which made a great impression upon the community.⁹

These activities brought about an increased membership in the various Zionist Societies. By the middle of 1906 the Rochester Council of Zionists, of which Saul Carson was president, reported that it had 500 members. They were now a strong enough group to join hands with fellow-Zionists elsewhere in an attempt to raise a million dollar fund for the purchase of land in Palestine.¹⁰ The recognition of the growing importance of the Rochester Council of Zionists brought to the community Dr. Shmarya Levin, a noted Jewish member of the Russian Duma and a leading Zionist.¹¹ Two years later still another unit was formed when the Zion Endeavor Society was organized.¹² Meetings of this group and the Young Men's Zionist Society, the most important of the Zionist clubs, were held in the Beth Israel synagogue and the "J.Y." In addition to Rabbi Ginsberg's interest, Rabbis Blechman, Lauterbach, and

Chertoff were most helpful in arranging for programs and speakers.¹³

The continued growth of the local Zionist organizations brought the seventeenth national convention of the Federation of American Zionists to Rochester in 1914. This was a great tribute to the Rochester organizations and a historic moment for all Jews in the area. This convention electrified the local Jewish community. Some of the greatest luminaries in American Jewish life arrived in Rochester to take part in the convention. Large numbers of people thronged the synagogue on the Saturday morning preceding the opening session. Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan of New York gave the sermon at Beth Israel, while Rabbi Eugene Kohn of Baltimore and Rabbi David de Sola Pool of New York spoke at other Orthodox synagogues.¹⁴ Even at Temple B'rith Kodesh, a leading liberal rabbi, Dr. Max Raisin, was guest preacher. Rabbi Horace Wolf introduced Rabbi Raisin as one with whom he differed, but proceeded to present him in a friendly way as "my enemy." Dr. Raisin argued that Reform was not opposed to Zionism. Obviously straining to influence his listeners, he declared that even "If Zionism is omitted from our prayer book, Reform is still not opposed to it."¹⁵

On Saturday evening the meetings were opened in Convention Hall. Louis Lipsky, who was a Rochesterian until he left for New York city in 1900, presided in his capacity as chairman of the executive committee. After a series of speeches, 300 children of the Rochester Hebrew schools were brought to the stage to render several religious songs. A reception at the "J.Y." building followed. Delegates and members of the "J.Y." and of the B'nai Zion Hebrew Library were the special guests of the arrangements committee.¹⁶ The next afternoon the delegates were again entertained by the Zion Endeavor Society of Rochester with an "automobile party."¹⁷

Sunday afternoon a historic meeting took place at the "J.Y." Miss Henrietta Szold had invited the women present to attend a conference representing the eight chapters of the Daughters of Zion. Groups were then functioning in New York city, Cleveland, Boston, Newark, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, and St. Paul. It will be recalled that a unit with a similar name had existed in Rochester as early as 1905. Apparently, it had petered out in the intervening

years. With Miss Szold in the chair, the ladies began to discuss the future role of women in the Zionist Movement. After denouncing the selling of flowers in the streets by the young girls, in behalf of Zionist work, because it "made for boldness and loss of modesty in children," the group got down to broader and more basic issues. It was proposed and accepted that the name Daughters of Zion be changed to Hadassah, which is Hebrew for myrtle. It was also decided that a central committee for the national organization be established in New York city. Great enthusiasm greeted these plans. A number of delegates at that meeting joined Miss Szold at the home of Mrs. Bernard Rose and that very evening a chapter of the Hadassah organization was started in the city in which it had received its name.¹⁸

That afternoon, people on the streets of downtown Rochester were greeted by the chimes of St. Peter's Church on Gibbs Street, which pealed forth the strains of *Hatikvah* (The Song of Hope) and other Jewish hymns. This was thrilling to the Jewish community and there was a great stir over it in many of its quarters. That evening the Convention took official notice of this courtesy and expressed its thanks to the St. Peter's congregation.¹⁹

At the Sunday evening meeting at Convention Hall, Louis Lipsky presided again. Two Yiddish speeches and one English address were scheduled. The newspapers reported that the "hall was so crowded, it was necessary to police the aisles and many had to leave."²⁰ The widely known orator Zvi Hirsch Maslansky, was the first to speak. His pronouncements were so moving that an orchestra located in the balcony broke out in the middle of his speech with the playing of *Hatikvah*, the Jewish national anthem. Dr. Judah Magnes then gave a moving address in English. The third and final speaker was the widely revered Dr. Shmarya Levin who had first addressed a Rochester Zionist meeting eight years before.²¹ The next day several thousand dollars were raised on the convention floor for the express purpose of helping subsidize Jewish schools in Palestine. At the concluding banquet, attended by over 500 people and held in Convention Hall Annex, Dr. Meyer Jacobstein presided as toastmaster. He was introduced by Saul Carson, who served as chairman of the convention resolutions committee.²² The renowned speakers

at the banquet were Abraham Goldberg and Jacob DeHaas of New York city.²³

In all, this convention was most successful. For Rochester Jewry it was an epochal event. It had strengthened the arm of local Zionism and gave the impetus for the establishment of the Women's Zionist organization, Hadassah, in which Mrs. Bernard Rose became the leading spirit. Young people, too, responded with fervor to the stimulus of the convention. Rabbi Paul Chertoff took up where it had left off and organized a Young Judea group in which Joseph Goldstein became a prominent leader and Philip Bernstein and Milton Steinberg were outstanding members. In short order several other similar groups were instituted. Young Philip Bernstein became president of the Young Judea Council. In two years there were over 150 members of Young Judea.²⁴ By 1925 the program of these clubs had become so widely accepted that it was found necessary to engage a paid director to coordinate and plan the activities of the more than fifteen Young Judea groups then in the city. A young women's section of the general Zionist movement was organized the year before as a result of Mrs. Bernard Rose's leadership. Thirty girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one enrolled as members of the group which identified themselves as part of the newly launched national Junior Hadassah.²⁵

Zionism had become an entrenched movement in the Rochester Jewish community though it was far from being the leading philosophy it became two decades later. As early as 1916 a "Palestine campaign" to raise money for Zionist settlements was successfully conducted by the Young Men's Zionist Society, the Poale Zion, the Mizrachi, and Young Judea, in a joint effort.²⁶ The Keren Hayesod established a Rochester office in 1923. The Keren Hayesod, or the Palestine Foundation Fund, was the major fund-raising instrument of the World Zionist Organization. Locally, Abraham Goldman, son of Hyman Goldman, conducted its office in the Elwood Building, which was then owned by his father. Actively aided by men such as Saul Carson, Bernard Rose, Alfred Hart, Lesser Paley, Hyman Kolko, Joseph Robfogel, Joseph Silverstein, Abraham D. Joffe, Hyman Goldman, and Lester Nusbaum, the Rochester Keren Hayesod conducted a series of successful fund-raising campaigns.

National and international Jewish leaders such as Emanuel Neuman and Chaim Weizmann came to the community in connection with these campaigns.²⁷ Mass meetings were held in the Lyceum Theater, the Temple Theater, or Convention Hall, where after vigorous speeches by these and other noted orators money was raised on the spot.

Even as these general Zionists were gaining momentum in the Jewish community, the nationalist idea had already found other adherents of a different character. At about the same time that the first Zionist society had been organized in Rochester, a small group of clothing workers had begun to meet informally to discuss the possibility of forming their own Zionist unit. These men, for the most part, had been imbued with the revolutionary spirit which permeated the persecuted groups in Czarist Russia. Yet they were unwilling to accept the internationalist socialist viewpoint of the Russian-Jewish Bund. They were closer to the "Workers of Zion," the newly formed Poale Zion of America which had met in its founding convention in Philadelphia in 1905.²⁸ While this group was strongly influenced by Marxian ideology, it nevertheless retained a staunch Jewish nationalist viewpoint. These people felt that socialism, by itself, offered no solution to the Jewish problem as long as the Jews were not established as a nation which possessed a normal economic structure with a strong working-class basis. Class war, they argued, could not fulfill its normal function, except within an independent national community. Obviously this point of view was in direct opposition to the ideology espoused by the *Arbeiter Ring*, the Workmen's Circle. They were criticized by the Socialists for their Zionism and by the Zionists for their Socialism.

When, in 1906, Morris Dubnikoff, Israel Carson, Nathan Perlmutter, Charles Kasdin, Gershon Avrunin, and Morris Weinstein met to found a Rochester branch of the Poale Zion, they did not, therefore, meet with a general acceptance among their fellow Jewish workers. Some workers, Orthodox in attitude, were indifferent to these political and social problems. Their Jewishness was chiefly expressed through ritual and rabbinic culture. Others had already affiliated with the non-Zionist Workmen's Circle; they far outnumbered these labor Zionists in the community. A handful had been influenced by the "love of Zion" (*Hibat Zion*) attitude of a group

of rabbinical students, while still in Russia. As the months passed the founders were joined by Julius Lipsky, Baruch Zuckerman, Isadore Greenhouse, Jacob Rubenstein, and Joseph Zelter. They met regularly in the B'nai Zion Hebrew Library on Chatham Street. While they did not attract large numbers of people, those who did join the Rochester Poale Zion, were, for the most part, zealous in their loyalties. They brought to the city a number of impressive Yiddish speakers. Slowly, they began to make an impact upon the community.

From the very first they stood out as a distinct group in the Jewish community. Since they were Marxian in viewpoint, a number of Zionists who might have joined them felt more at home with the general Zionists under the leadership of Saul Carson. They were also indifferent if not opposed to the religious expression of Judaism. As a result, the more pious Zionists could not easily make common cause with them. It was this sense of uniqueness that caused them, in 1910, to establish their own school for children. Their *Folk Shule*, or people's school, met every Saturday and Sunday morning in rented quarters on Chatham Street. The leaders of the group themselves undertook to instruct the children in the Poale Zion ideology, as well as to teach both the Yiddish and Hebrew languages. The number of pupils was small and this was perhaps because the mothers of the children, who most often were responsible for this aspect of their children's training, were more pious than their husbands. As a result, some of the children of Poale Zion members were sent by their mothers to the community Talmud Torah, where Orthodox rituals were taught. In this manner the young boys could become Bar Mitzvah, which they could not at the Folk Shule, for there such rituals were scoffed at.

In June, 1910, an outstanding event took place in the life of the Rochester Poale Zion when the founding conference of the Farband, the Jewish National Workers' Alliance, took place in the city. Apparently Rochester was looked upon as a fertile territory for new adherents—the Jewish clothing worker was viewed with hope. The Farband planned to set up a fraternal order which offered insurance benefits to its members. Following the example of the successful Workmen's Circle, it hoped to attract workers to the cause of labor Zionism by means of these direct economic aids. This

method throws clear light on the outlook of the Jewish worker. Because of his great financial insecurity, his first concern, most naturally, was the status of his own family. The Poale Zion group felt the need of competing with the Workmen's Circle, the lodges, and the various national federations of Jews, the *landsmanschaften*. These groups had incorporated insurance features into their programs and the struggling Jewish worker found these most attractive.

The founding conference was attended by a handful of people from the few cities where Poale Zion had already been established. It made little impression in Rochester beyond the circle of the small labor Zionist group itself. A search for a newspaper report of the meeting reveals that no mention of it was made in the local press. However, the basic program for the Farband was discussed and approved. While its formal organization and incorporation was still several years away, the Farband had its genesis in this Rochester meeting.²⁹

The Rochester Poale Zion again achieved national recognition in 1914. In June, the Federation of American Zionists had conducted their national convention in Rochester. Several months later, in December, the Poale Zion gathered at Rochester in what the local press called an "international convention."³⁰ This convention was said to have "universal importance on account of the havoc wrought in the movement by the war in Europe."³¹ Socialist-Zionist dignitaries from distant places came to the convention. Meetings were held in a number of different places—Augustine Hall, Kaplan's Hall, and Convention Hall.³² Among the well-known orators was the leading spirit of the group, the youthful Ber Borochov. Other members were Shlomo Kaplansky, Nachum Syrkin, Hayim Fineman, Gershon Avrunin, and Baruch Zuckerman.³³ Zuckerman read a paper on "Jewish Trade Unions in America." Throughout the convention the relationship of the Poale Zion to the labor and Socialist movements was constantly stressed. In fact, at one point a heated controversy broke out on just such an issue. The executive committee had passed a resolution in favor of the Socialist Party. A number of members denounced this and urged that the Poale Zion give equal recognition to the Socialist Labor Party. Freedom of personal choice between these two contending

Socialist parties was finally granted the members. On the other hand, the convention passed a rule over which there was no debate. This resolution "made it the duty of each member of the organization to belong to a trade union."³⁴

The convention enhanced the prestige of the Rochester Poale Zion. The presence of these outstanding Jewish labor leaders made an impression and the alignment of the organization with the broader workers' movements gave it added stature in the eyes of Rochester's non-Jewish labor community.

Hardly as strong as the growing Workmen's Circle organization, the Poale Zion, nevertheless, continued to make progress. It had even organized, in 1915, a small branch, whose members were English-speaking young people.³⁵ Activities of the Poale Zion were enhanced by reason of the great personal commitment that many of its members had to the Marxian-Zionist ideology. In 1917 several of its members left Rochester to join the Jewish Legion in battle against the Turkish army. Louis Feinman, Joseph Gordon, Louis Levin, and William Weil were among those who were impelled to take part in this historic effort. When the Balfour Declaration was announced, the ranks of the Rochester Poale Zion were greatly augmented. "Prosperity" had come to the labor Zionists for the very first time. Soon they purchased their own home at 27 Buchan Park which they occupied in 1922. In this new environment they began to undertake several additional activities. A regular afternoon school was opened at these headquarters. Now the Folk Shule was expanded and approximately forty children were in regular attendance. In addition, they organized a credit union, which offered small loans at low interest rates. This activity, however, was too much of an undertaking for them, and it was dropped sometime in 1923, to be revived ten years later. Although it had small beginnings, by 1925 the Poale Zion was the only Zionist group in the city which owned its own "home" and which conducted intensive educational and cultural activities.³⁶

The Orthodox elements of the community had to wait until 1914 before they formed a separate Zionist movement of their own. Prior to this time, most Orthodox Zionists were part of Saul Carson's general Zionist Council. The Mizrachi Zionist movement, consisting of those Zionists who sought to establish the Jewish home-

land "for the people of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel," was organized in Europe in 1902. In May, 1914, a founding convention for an American counterpart was held in Cincinnati, Ohio. This gave the impetus for the founding of Rochester Mizrachi. Rabbi Solomon Sadowsky went to that gathering and soon after his return to Rochester organized a local chapter of the Mizrachi Organization of America. He was made Honorary President, while Max Cohen was elected president. The group remained very ardent but small, numbering for many years no more than fifty men and women.³⁷ Their meetings were, of course, conducted in the Yiddish language and were held either at the B'nai Zion Library or the Associated Hebrew Charities building on Baden Street.

In 1919 Rabbi Sadowsky was instrumental in forming the Up-State New York Region of the Mizrachi Organization. At its conference held in Rochester, he was elected president of the newly formed region. For two years it continued to function only feebly; then it became a dormant group and remained so until it was reorganized more than fifteen years later.³⁸

Mizrachi remained a small organization within the Zionist family in Rochester. This was the result of a number of factors. To begin with, a number of the older Orthodox Jews in the community had no desire to identify themselves with Zionism, which they conceived to be a secular nationalist movement, even though the Mizrachi ideology was Orthodox Zionist. For them Palestine was a place where Jews went to die and be buried, not a place in which to live and build.³⁹ Moreover, some Orthodox Jews had been attracted to Zionism in its pre-Mizrachi days and had developed staunch ties to the general Zionist movement through the Federation of American Zionists. Despite their own Orthodox leanings these men were willing to unite on a broad Zionist platform with others who were not as concerned about Orthodoxy as they were.

Zionism in Rochester, as in other American cities, reached its peak organizational strength in the late 1940s. Yet in the first twenty-five years of this century it had planted the vital seeds for future growth. In that earlier period, however, it served as a barrier between the traditional and the Reform communities. It was, in a sense, a symbol of the ideological conflict: comprehensive integration into American life versus the maintenance of a strong folk

life. Paradoxically, in the later period, when Zionism was to reach its full stature, it served as a force for uniting the Jewish community.

In 1899 Louis Lipsky, writing in *The Shofar*, a short-lived Rochester Jewish periodical, had foreseen this. He had recommended then that the only solution to the rift between the Orthodox and Reform groups was "the star" of Zionism which would give "a common objective to all Jews." At the time he was derided by the Reform community. But the stirrings of Jewish national liberation at the mid-century made Lipsky something of a prophet.⁴⁰ Far from dividing the Rochester Jewish community, Zionism then helped unify and strengthen it. In combining forces for the sake of the establishment of a Jewish homeland, Rochester's Jewish groups came closer together, and in the service of a common good, found new unity.

20

TOWARD MATURITY

. . . And when we thus try to penetrate the mist that encircles the horizon of the present, a vision unfolds itself before our mind's eye, presenting a picture of the future American Israel. We perceive a community great in numbers, mighty in power, enjoying life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; actively participating in the civic, social and economic progress of the country, . . . yet deeply rooted in the soil of Judaism, clinging to its past, working for its future, true to its traditions, faithful to its aspirations, one in sentiment with their brethren wherever they are, attached to the land of their fathers as the cradle and resting place of the Jewish spirit; men with . . . no conviction crippled, . . . self-centered and self-reliant; receiving and resisting, not yielding like wax to every impress from the outside . . . adding a new note to the richness of American life, leading a new current into the stream of American civilization; not a formless crowd of taxpayers and voters, but a sharply marked community, distinct and distinguished, trusted for its loyalty, respected for its dignity, esteemed for its tradition, valued for its aspirations, . . .¹

THIS was the vision of the future American Jewish community which Dr. Israel Friedlaender foresaw in 1907.

The Rochester Jewish community between 1900 and 1925 seemed far away indeed from the fulfillment of this prophecy. The first twenty-five years of the twentieth century were fateful ones for local Jews—they were years of change and confusion. What had been a relatively simple, monolithic society of German *landsleute*, who had already been assimilated into American life, became a community of duplicate and competitive organizations, of conflicting purposes and divided interests. Sharp and continuing tensions grew up.

Only when East European and German Jews should live together as American Jews, equal in the sight of each other, could a healthy Jewish group life develop. Had there been no mass immigration of East European Jews, however, it is possible that the Jews might have been completely submerged within the total Rochester community. On the other hand, the impact of the wave of Russian and Polish immigration was so heavy that it split the Jewish community into two sections, with two separate spheres of interest. In retrospect, however, the formation of an independent, self-sufficient East European Jewish community served a beneficial purpose, after all. It provided the new immigrant with the opportunities for training in community management and leadership. It also made it possible for a more intensive Jewish cultural and religious life to take root in the twentieth-century environment. This cross-fertilization of ideas within the Jewish community itself helped to strengthen it. New life, new color, and deeper loyalties were infused into the Rochester Jewish community.

In this process of melting down the sharp differences which divided Jew from Jew, the power of numbers cannot be overemphasized. The German Jew held the advantages of seniority and of the social and economic benefits which accrued from his longer period of settlement. But the numerical superiority which the East European Jew enjoyed, soon after the turn of the century, made it possible for him to feel more secure in his new home. This security, in turn, helped him establish a strong inner communal life.

The feeling of security was naturally intensified by the growing economic stability of the Jews of Rochester. The fairly rapid fashion in which thousands of new immigrants were integrated into the local economy would have been impossible without the organized efforts of local Jewish charities. But as Rochester industry itself became more diversified in this period, so Jews, too, were able to enter a wider variety of enterprises. Many became independent and self-supporting. Even the many thousands who remained as workers in the factories came to enjoy better protection as a result of union activity. The growth of a more secure outlook on the part of the immigrant community, stemming from greater economic stability, was reflected in their Jewish communal attitudes. The economic development of Rochester Jews, then, also helped set the stage for

the unification of the disparate elements of the community. As the German and the East European groups achieved greater economic parity, the barriers that had separated them began to fall.

The American public school system also served the cause of Jewish unity. Within the walls of these institutions Jewish children of different national origins and religious backgrounds came to look upon themselves as members of the same community. As the children of East European families rubbed shoulders with their fellow students they became more deeply conscious of their American nationality. Old World prejudices were somewhat erased. And inevitably, for the children of the East European and the German sections, the prejudices and conflicts of their parents became, in many instances, insignificant and devoid of meaning.

Common Jewish problems brought the two sections together, sometimes in spite of themselves. The relief of Jewish war sufferers in Europe and the welfare work in the army camps were among the many activities of the period which helped unify the Jewish community. In addition to these welfare undertakings, the "J.Y." served as a common meeting place for the younger people of the two groups.

The drive toward Jewish unity and community integration found an unexpected source of support in the pressure brought to bear upon Jewish organizations from the outside. The efforts of the Rochester Community Chest to amalgamate the Jewish charities in order to avoid obvious duplication resulted in the formation of the Jewish Welfare Council. Out of this merger there developed a growing realization of the need for organizing a single, coordinated Jewish welfare agency which would represent all the Jews of the community.

In turn, however, as the coordinated charity assumed greater importance, there developed a strong tendency toward the secularization of Jewish life. Synagogues, once the pivot of community activity, were in danger of being engulfed, but in some measure, they had only themselves to blame. They showed little concern for the needs of the younger generation; they lacked unity among themselves; they were still primarily concerned with purely ritual matters. As such, they could not compete with the appeal that secular Jewish organizations, like the charity, had for those many members

of the Jewish community who were strongly conscious of social welfare needs. Only toward the end of the period did synagogues begin to emerge as important social and educational centers.

The Rochester Jewish community of 1925 was still an adolescent community. It possessed new-found powers but lacked the necessary maturity for their proper application and use. Now that immigration had virtually come to a standstill, its strength could not be augmented from abroad, as before. It had to turn to its own inner resources. But this meant that it would have to wait until the second generation of East Europeans matured, before the community could achieve its full stature and present "a picture of the future American Israel" and so fulfill the prophecy of Dr. Friedlaender.



Notes



NOTES

NOTES TO 1: JEWS COME TO ROCHESTER

1. Rochester *Times-Union*, November 13, 1951.
2. Rochester *Telegraph*, May 24, 1825.
3. Rochester *Telegraph*, June 28, 1825.
4. This is preserved in the rooms of the Buffalo Historical Society.
5. Other variant spellings: Mire, Meyer.
6. Isaac A. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester* (1912), p. 8. In this book Wile claims that Greentree "definitely settled in Rochester" in 1843. An obituary notice of Myer Greentree in *Jewish Tidings*, September 5, 1890 states: "He, Greentree, came to America in 1840 and at once took up his residence in the city."
7. Rochester *Daily Democrat*, April 5, 1844. Rochester *Daily Advertiser*, April 11, 1844. The *Advertiser* wrote: "Married—on April 3—at the Garden Resort, Greece, April 3, by Rev. J. B. Olcott, Mr. Meyer Greentree, merchant of Rochester to Miss Elizabeth Baker, of the latter place."
8. Rochester *Republican*, May 14, 1844. Rosenberg, however, left Rochester for Brooklyn, New York, after a few years. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 8.
9. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 8.
10. In the Rochester *Directory* for 1845-46, on page 33 of the advertisements, appears an announcement of "The Paris Cash Store" at No. One Main Street, Bridge, and "The Lace Store," No. One Front Street. Both of these were owned by "Joseph Altman and Brother."
11. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 9. Miriam Seligman, granddaughter of Morris Seligman, has informed the author that her grandparents came to Rochester in 1845. They were married in New York city a few months before. The author has a copy of the Seligman Hebrew marriage contract.

12. *Ibid.*
13. See U.S. Census (1850), List of Names, typed copy; Rochester Public Library.
14. U.S. Census (1850), List of Names, typed copy; Bertha Altman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Altman, was the first Jewish child born in Rochester. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 20. She was born on January 24, 1845.
- Henry M. Seligman was the first Jewish boy born in Rochester, on October 29, 1847. The flyleaf of the family prayer book, a copy of which is in the author's possession, reads: "Henry M. Seligman was born on the 29th day of October, 1847 in the Irving House—Rochester." Under this, in Hebrew, the Jewish dating is listed: "Friday, the nineteenth day of Heshvan, 5608, according to tradition."
15. See Salo W. Baron and Jeannette M. Baron, "Palestinian Messengers in America, 1849-79," *Jewish Social Studies*, V, Nos. 2 and 3, 115-62; 225-91. See also Abraham Goodman, "An American Jewish Peddler's Diary," *American Jewish Archives*, III (1951), No. 3, 81-111. This diary, translated from German, provides a vivid description of the life of a Jewish peddler in the America of that day.
16. Blake McKelvey, "The Population of Rochester," *Rochester History*, XII (1950), No. 4, 8.
17. Rochester *Daily Democrat*, June 16, 1848. Here the value of the manufactured output of Rochester clothing firms is given as \$400,000. It is entirely possible that this figure is exaggerated, however.
18. See Goodman, "An American Jewish Peddler's Diary," *American Jewish Archives*, III (1950), 81-111, *passim*.
19. Quoted in Blake McKelvey, *Rochester, the Water-Power City*, p. 330; also in *Dewey Scrapbook, General Information*, III, p. 93.
20. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 21.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 103. In 1870, the average annual wage of the clothing workers is given as \$301 compared to \$383 for the shoemakers.
23. B. E. Lowe, *Rochester Industry and Trade Unions*, M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Rochester, 1912; 71 percent of the strikes failed in Rochester while over the nation 70 percent of the strikes were successful!
24. Rochester *Daily American*, April 7, 23, 1853. Rochester *Daily Democrat*, May 7, 1853, p. 3. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Water-Power City*, p. 328.
25. Rochester *Daily American*, February 17, 1852, p. 3.
26. The author has seen an exchange of memoranda between the family of Morris Seligman and the owners of a well in Oil City, Penn-

sylvania, indicating that the Seligman family was at least one of the many Jewish families that had purchased these oil lands.

27. For a fuller discussion of these economic problems see McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, pp. 9-18.

28. J. M. Parker, *Rochester—A Story Historical*, p. 390.

29. U.S. Census, 1860, III, 377. However, we should point out the general unreliability of this Census.

NOTES TO 2: EARLY SOCIAL LIFE

1. *The Occident*, XII (June, 1854), 167.

2. *Ibid.*

3. This was Lodge #380 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

4. *City Directory*, Rochester, Monroe County, 1853, p. 34.

5. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 17.

6. The leadership of the Odd Fellows was apparently mainly in the hands of Germans. See *City Directory*, 1853, p. 34.

7. *The Occident*, XIII (December, 1855), p. 467. Reference is made to the fact that "the congregation consists [1855] of Germans, Englishmen and Poles who are all acting in harmony." We have no other evidence of Polish Jews in Rochester at this time. It is doubtful that there were more than a very few Polish Jews, if any.

8. *Jewish Tidings*, October 18, 1889.

9. Journal of the Assembly of the State of New York, 80th Session, p. 8.

10. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 13. Neuhafer had died by drowning shortly after 1859. See *Rochester City Directory*, 1857, p. 300; 1859, p.

215.

11. *The (American) Israelite*, III (1856), 116, indicates that in 1856 the congregation numbered 100 men.

12. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, October 8, 1857.

13. *The (American) Israelite*, III (1856), 116.

14. *Ibid.*, IX (October, 1862), 131.

15. *Rochester Daily Democrat*, June 16, 1848, p. 2 indicated the investment in the local clothing industry to be \$400,000. All commercial shipments from Rochester were valued at \$8,400,000 in 1854. These cropped to \$6,667,000 in 1855, and by 1860 fell to \$2,830,000. See Assembly *DOC*. 1855, No. 95; 1856, No. 212; 1861, No. 93, p. 85.

16. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, February 4, 1865, for the year 1863. Stettheimer is mentioned as one of forty-seven Rochesterians whose income for 1863 was over \$10,000. A wholesale clothing merchant, he was apparently the third richest man in Rochester in 1863.

17. *Ibid.*, February 5, 1864.

18. Blake McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 76.
19. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, July 16, 1862.
20. The first Jewish settlers in Rochester were almost all men in their late twenties or early thirties. See U.S. Census (1850) List of Names of Monroe County, typed copy, Rochester Public Library.
21. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, October 17, 1862; July 14, August 23, 1862; May 23, 1864. Corporal Joseph Levy, of nearby Lyons, New York, was killed at the battle of Gaines Mill, Virginia, on June 27, 1862.
22. Rosenthal was commissioned as Second Lieutenant of Company "L" of the 54th Regiment. Williams was brought out of retirement to reorganize the regiment he had founded in 1850. For a complete description of the history of this unit, see Wheeler Case, "Rochester Citizen Soldiers," Rochester Historical Society, *Publications*, XIV (1936), 221-88, especially pp. 257-72.
23. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, October 17, 1862. *The (American) Israelite*, IX (October, 1862), 131.
24. The 54th Regiment was mustered into federal service for 100 days on July 26, 1864. Conditions at the prisoner camp in Elmira required reinforcements. See Case, "Rochester Citizen Soldiers," p. 259. Frederick Phisterer (comp.), *New York in the War of Rebellion, 1861 to 1865* (Albany, 1912), I, 654.
25. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, August 23, 1864.
26. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1864.
27. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1865. Phisterer, *New York in the War of Rebellion*, I, 654. *City Directory*, 1869, p. 257. See also Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier, and Citizen* (Philadelphia, 1895), p. 289.
28. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, August 26, 1862.
29. *Jewish Record*, III (March 18, 1864).
30. I. M. Wise in *The (American) Israelite*, X (December 11, 1863), 187.
31. See Bertram Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, pp. 117-19, for a further discussion of the general implications of this act. Also, *The (American) Israelite*, IX (September 19, 1862), 83; IX (October 17, 1862), No. 15, 116-17.
32. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, August 26, 1862. See also *Jewish Record*, I (October 3, 1862), 6. *The (American) Israelite*, IX (October 31, 1862), 131.
33. *Jewish Record*, III (January 8, 1864), 1.
34. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 21.
35. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, pp. 144-46.

36. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, August 23, 1862. Elias Wolf, H. Bretenstool, Abram Stern, Julius Wile offered bounties on this occasion. See also *ibid.*, August 22, 1862.

37. The Independent Literary Union presented a three act drama, "Don Caesar De Bazan," in Corinthian Hall, before 1,200 of the city's most important people. The group advertised that proceeds would be equally divided between the Jewish Widows and Orphans Fund and the orphans of a stricken Catholic family.

38. *The (American) Israelite*, XVI (October, 1869), No. 15, 11; XVI (1869), No. 23, 11.

39. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 18. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, October 30, 1873.

NOTES TO 3: THE SYNAGOGUE

1. Berith Kodesh was the accepted spelling of the congregation's name until the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was changed to B'rith Kodesh.

2. The congregation published, in 1948, a brief history delineating its development: *Temple B'rith Kodesh 1848-1948* (Rochester, New York), 43 pp.

3. See Mt. Hope Cemetery Association Records. Isaac Brickner on pp. 41-42 of Isaac Wile's history of *The Jews of Rochester* writes erroneously that the burial ground was purchased in 1846. He notes that "Jacob and Joseph Altman, Samuel Marks, A. Weinberg and Myer Rothschild purchased together a burial plot for \$40. This was the first suggestion of banding together. These were the only married Jewish men at the time." R. Rothschild in the Mt. Hope record is apparently a mistake for Myer Rothschild, while Joseph Weil is apparently the same as Joseph Wile. The earliest record of Jews listed in Mt. Hope Cemetery Records is for April 3, 1848.

4. The earliest burials, beginning with the first (Sampson Rosenberg, 28 years of age, on August 30, 1849), were listed as interred in "Jew Ground." The section is actually "396 O." It was not until about 1860 that burials in section 396 O were listed that way. Until that time they were all listed as "Jew Ground."

5. The founders were A. Adler, Jacob Altman, Joseph Altman, Jacob Ganz, Joseph Katz, Henry Levi, Samuel Marks, Meyer Rothschild, Abram Weinberg, Joseph and Gabriel Wile, and Elias Wolff.

6. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 10. Certificate of Incorporation speaks of Berith Kodesh Society, but this was later, in 1854.

7. *The (American) Israelite*, September 8, 1855, pp. 90-91. The first Odd Fellows in Rochester had also used this hall.
8. *Ibid.*
9. In the Barons' "Palestinian Messengers in America, 1849-79," there is a listing of contributions made in Rochester to a Palestinian charity. S. Treumann, secretary pro tem, is listed along with Rev. Mordecai Tuska of Congregation B'nai B'rith.
10. *The (American) Israelite*, XXX (1884), 5.
11. *The Occident*, XII (June, 1854), 167.
12. *Ibid.*
13. See *City Directory*, Rochester, New York, 1850-53.
14. Stuart E. Rosenberg, *The Changing Role of the Rabbi*, typescript, M.A. Thesis, Columbia Univ., 1948. In Europe, rabbis served communities rather than individual congregations. It was a German reform tendency to identify the rabbi with the congregation.
15. Rabbi Abraham Geiger, in a controversy with Rabbi S. A. Tiktin some years earlier in Breslau, had established the unity of the functions of "rabbi, teacher and preacher." For a brief description see Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-43. On the effects of this new rabbinic role in America see Hyman Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860*, pp. 81-84.
16. Isaac Mayer Wise, *Reminiscences*, p. 45.
17. *The Occident*, XIII (November, 1855), 417; XII (June, 1854), 167. Tuska was apparently not nearly as strong-minded as Wise. Wise was fighting for a principle, which in fact helped mold an institutional pattern—the American Rabbinate.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Hebrew Leader*, July 28, 1871.
20. Salo W. Baron, and J. M. Baron, "Palestinian Messengers in America, 1849-79."
21. *Ibid.*, p. 133-134. Baron reproduces the letter Tuska copied from Wise. "Our worthy Brother Rabbi Aaron Selig Ashkenasi, messenger of our poor Brethren in the holy City of Jerusalem, which the Lord may restore, has come to us to solicit our aid for the poor of our people; but since many of our members are absent from the City, nothing could be done in his favor until Pesach [Hebrew] next I will try to constitute with God's help [Hebrew] a society to aid the poor of Jerusalem. It is a lamentable feature of the total absence of national love among our brethren the remnants of Israel, that even the rich, whom God has blessed with abundance, withdraw their hands from the needy and poor watchmen, that God's mercy allowed to remain in the sacred vineyard.

. . . I hope that other Congregations and individuals will do more for the house of Israel."

22. Rochester *Daily Union*, September 30, 1856.
23. Organized in 1850.
24. Rochester *Daily Democrat*, August 26, 1851. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 7, 1871.
25. *The Occident*, XIII (November, 1855), 416.
26. Foreword to *Stranger in the Synagogue* (Rochester, N.Y., 1854).
27. Rochester *Daily Democrat*, June 5, 1854.
28. *The Occident*, XIII (November, 1855), 416.
29. *The Occident*, V, No. 8. *The (American) Israelite*, IV: 101, 118; V: 6, 197. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 7 and 11, 1871.
Simon Tuska apparently was appointed to teach Hebrew at the Union Theological Seminary. We have no data indicating his actual service as an instructor. Tuska left a lasting impression in Rochester. On January 10, 1871, a memorial service was conducted, honoring him. Dr. Martin J. Anderson, president of the University of Rochester, and Mr. R. D. Jones, superintendent of Rochester schools, were the principal speakers. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 11, 1871.
30. November 16, 1854. Certificate of Incorporation, County Clerk, Monroe County, New York.
31. *The Occident*, XII (June, 1854), 167. *The (American) Israelite*, September 8, 1855, pp. 90-91.
32. *The (American) Israelite*, September 8, 1855, pp. 90-91.
33. *Ibid.*, September 8, 1855.
34. *The (American) Israelite*, September 8, 1855, pp. 90-91.
35. A church from whose premises all statues and crucifixes have been removed may be renovated to suit the requirements of traditional synagogue worship.
36. This would seem to imply that there was such a separation at Front Street. We have no direct evidence of this.
37. *The (American) Israelite*, April 4, 1856, p. 314.
38. *Ibid.*, II (December 14, 1855), 190.
39. *The (American) Israelite*, II (December 14, 1855).
40. *Ibid.*, August 22, 1856, p. 54.
41. *Ibid.*, II (April 4, 1856), 54. Rochester *Daily Union*, August 4, 1856.
42. *The (American) Israelite*, II (April 4, 1856), 54. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 11; here the cost is listed as \$6,500.
43. For examples of this see Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York*, p. 356.

44. *The (American) Israelite* (September 8, 1855), 90-91.
45. *Ibid.*, II (June 27, 1856), 415. The school opened on June 15, with 70 pupils. See also Isaac A. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 12. He speaks of a Mr. King as teacher of English subjects.
46. *The (American) Israelite*, II (June 27, 1856), 415.
47. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 12. *The Occident*, XIX (January, 1857), 503. Wile merely says that a schoolhouse was "provided." *The Occident* source maintains that they "erected a handsome school-house and fitted it up tastefully with all that is needful." My own feeling is that they used a residence and did not erect a new building for school purposes.
48. This document is dated 1857. It is an agreement between the Board of the Chevra Talmud Torah and the Board of the congregation. The Chevra Talmud Torah lent its *Sefer Torah* to the congregation but only on the condition that it be returned to the *Chevra* on written notice. See also Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, May 29, 1861, p. 2.
49. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 12.
50. In Mt. Hope Cemetery, Jewish monuments of this period carry German inscriptions.
51. See McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 37. There were at this time forty-four Protestant churches and six Catholic churches in Rochester. The Catholics increased their strength after 1860.
52. *The (American) Israelite*, III (June 5, 1857), 382.
53. *Ibid.*, VI (September 23, 1859), 94.
54. *Ibid.*, VIII (April 18, 1862), 335. David Ettenheimer left a legacy of \$1,000.
55. *Jewish Messenger*, May 9, 1861. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, May 29, 1861.
56. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 13.
57. Moshe Davis, *Yahadut Amerika Be-Hitpathutah* [The Shaping of American Judaism] (New York, 1951), pp. 101-19.
58. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 13.
59. *The (American) Israelite*, III (August 22, 1856), *The Occident*, XIV (January, 1857), 503.
60. *The (American) Israelite*, III (October 24, 1856), 130.
61. A letter from Rochester signed "M.L.G." in *The (American) Israelite*, XXX (1884), 5. This is probably Max L. Gutman, who was a leader of the opposition to introducing the prayer book of Dr. Landsberg.
62. *The (American) Israelite*, III (October 24, 1856), 130.
63. *Ibid.*, III (June 5, 1857), 382.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Berith Kodesh Minute Books do not refer to it nor do any of the published historical sketches of the congregation.

66. Certificate of Incorporation, Monroe County Clerk. A check of the property at No. 28 Lancaster Street fails to reveal that a building specially constructed as a synagogue was located there. The property was apparently in private hands.

67. *Jewish Tidings*, May 11, 1888. This is an obituary notice of Isaac S. Samuel. It is claimed here that Samuel, born in London, England, in 1822, came to Rochester in 1847. However, he was not an incorporator of Berith Kodesh and not active in its early history. He is listed in the *City Directory* of 1850 as a merchant tailor and with business transacted at 3 addresses.

68. *Rochester Daily Union*, March 3, 1855.

69. Park's criticism in *The (American) Israelite*, in 1860, speaks of "our congregation," implying that again he worshiped as a member of Berith Kodesh.

70. *The (American) Israelite*, VI (September 23, 1859), 94.

71. *Jewish Messenger*, May 11, 1860. "On entering office Dr. Sarner professed sterling orthodoxy and if he changed his principles to suit the tastes of those who are professedly his friends, no wonder that dissatisfaction should be the result."

72. *The (American) Israelite*, VI (September 23, 1859), 94.

After arduous attempts to establish the truth of the assertions regarding Sarner's educational background, we have not been able to find adequate documentation.

In a letter to the author, dated July 20, 1953, the authorities of the University of Berlin indicate the following:

1. A search of the records and the catalogues of dissertations of the Royal Friedrich Wilhelm University (Berlin) from 1810 to 1885 fails to reveal that Ferdinand Sarner was graduated from that institution.

2. Sarner was a student at the Royal Friedrich Wilhelm University from the winter of 1851 until the spring of 1854.

3. The Doctor of Theology degree apparently could not be granted to any other than confessing trinitarian Christians, since the oath of graduation demanded belief in the Trinity.

Moreover, it is just as doubtful that Sarner ever received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The Justus Liebig Hochschule in Giessen, Germany, successor to the University of Hesse has indicated to the author, in a letter dated July 22, 1953 that Ferdinand Sarner had indeed applied to the faculty in 1858 for permission to receive a degree "in ab-

sentia," but since he was not a student at that university his request was denied.

73. Advertisement inserted in the *Jewish Messenger* by Berith Kodesh, September 16, 1859, dated September 9, 1859. It was signed by Moses Hays, President.

74. Wise, *Reminiscences*, p. 54.

75. *Jewish Messenger*, December 2, 1859; May 4, 1860.

76. *Y'Kum Purkan, Bameh Madlikin, Pittum Haketoret*. These prayers are today deleted in many Conservative congregations.

77. *Jewish Messenger*, VII (June 8, 1860), 173.

78. *The (American) Israelite*, II (October 12, 1855), 107; II (September 8, 1855), 91.

79. *Ibid.*, VI (February, 1860), 267.

80. *Jewish Messenger*, April 20, 1860.

81. *Ibid.*, VII (June 8, 1860), 173. We read a feeling of betrayal into these words of Park. It was during Rabbi Mayer's ministry in Rochester that Park joined the secession from Berith Kodesh. In retrospect, he now prefers Mayer to Sarner. The latter, in Park's opinion, was supposed to be Orthodox and turned out to be Reform.

82. *Ibid.*.

83. For resolutions, see Appendix.

84. Bertram Korn, "Jewish Chaplains during the Civil War," *American Jewish Archives*; Anshi Chesed Board of Trustees Minutes, 1856-1866, p. 414.

85. *The (American) Israelite*, VIII (November 1, 1861), 141.

86. From the copy of the certification in *Records of the War Department*, Office of the Adjutant General, in the National Archives.

87. However, despite this seemingly accurate statement, in the absence of more positive documentation of Sarner's degrees, it is possible that the chaplains' endorsement was based upon erroneous and even deceitful evidence. It may be said that Sarner was no more a "graduate of two of the German universities" than he was a "regularly ordained minister of the Lutheran Church."

88. Korn believes it possible that the chaplains assumed that a regiment composed of a majority of German Gentiles would elect a Protestant chaplain. However, it is possible that Sarner himself was unaware of the revision of the August 3, 1861, law which authorized the appointment of chaplains, "Provided that none but regularly ordained ministers of some *Christian* denomination shall be eligible to selection or appointment." This exclusion of non-Christians was later rescinded in the Act

of July 17, 1862, which admitted "a minister of *some* religious denomination." 12 Stat. 288; 12 Stat. 594. Sarner was apparently very anxious to enlist. Though his passport indicates that he was born on February 8, 1820, he told the Army authorities in 1863, that he was then only 38!

89. Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, Special Order No. 330, par. 36, October 3, 1864.

90. *Ibid.*, Special Order No. 63, par. 17, March 18, 1869.

91. *Jewish Messenger*, August 23, 1878.

92. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, March 8, 1860.

93. *Hebrew Leader*, April 20, 1866. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, January 7, 11, 1871.

94. *Jewish Messenger*, January 13, 1871.

95. *The Occident*, XIII (December, 1855), 467.

96. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, July 11, 1860.

97. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1865.

98. *The (American) Israelite*, X (1861), 102.

99. Berith Kodesh Minute Book, November 20, 1874. Letter written by Schmidt indicating he is about to complete 15 years. Prior to coming to Rochester, Schmidt served as reader in a synagogue in Brooklyn. After leaving Rochester in 1875, he took a position as reader in the Gates of Prayer congregation, in New York city. He died in New York city in 1890, at the age of 61, after living thirty-eight years in America. See *Jewish Tidings*, November 14, 1890.

100. *The (American) Israelite*, VIII (1862), 406.

101. *Jewish Messenger*, August 4, 1865. An advertisement inserted in this issue states: "Mohel (Hebrew)—To Israelites of Rochester, Buffalo and adjacent places.—Rev. Levy Rosenblatt, Elmira, N. Y." See also Jeremiah J. Berman, "The Trend in Jewish Religious Observance in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," *American Jewish Historical Society, Publications*, XXXVII (1947), 31–53. Here we have a discussion of the traveling Jewish religious functionary.

102. *Jewish Messenger*, VIII (November 30, 1860), 165. The talk given by Henry Seligman is in the hands of the author.

103. Hyman B. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654–1860*, p. 428.

104. David S. Philipson, *Reform Movement in Judaism*, p. 498.

105. *The (American) Israelite*, October 22, 1862.

106. *Ibid.*, X (1863), 2.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

108. *Ibid.*, X (September 4, 1863), 74.

109. *The (American) Israelite*, X (May 20, 1864), 371. Rabbi Guinzberg also composed a special prayer in behalf of the Union, *Jewish Messenger*, XV (May 27, 1864), 157.

110. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, January 30, 1865; February 6, 1865.

111. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1867.

112. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1865.

113. This was a very unusual act in the American synagogue. We have few references to a similar usage. Grinstein, however, does indicate that, in 1841, Shearith Israel shrouded the *tebah* in black after the death of President Benjamin Harrison. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York*, p. 270. See also American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, XXI, 221.

114. In a lengthy obituary, *Jewish Tidings*, December 30, 1892, Dr. Landsberg refers to Moses Hays' "pioneering efforts in the Jewish reform movement."

115. *The (American) Israelite*, XIV (August 16, 1867), 4.

116. *Ibid.*, XVI (1869), No. 12, p. 6.

117. *Ibid.*, No. 17, p. 11.

118. *Jewish Messenger*, December 17, 1869.

119. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 16.

120. *The (American) Israelite*, II (September 8, 1855), 90-91.

121. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 16.

122. *The (American) Israelite*, III (October 24, 1856), 130.

123. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, October 8, 1857.

124. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 16. This source gives the date of incorporation as February 26, 1878.

125. *The (American) Israelite*, X (1861), 102.

126. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 19.

127. *The Occident*, XIV (January, 1857), 503. *The (American) Israelite*, III (October 24, 1856), 130.

128. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 21. See also *Jewish Tidings*, October 11, 1889, for brief history of this organization.

129. This was especially so in the Rochester area. See Blake McKelvey, "Woman's Rights in Rochester A Century of Progress," *Rochester History*, X (July, 1948), Nos. 2 and 3.

130. We do not know how many actually subscribed but according to Isaac Mayer Wise in his *Reminiscences*, p. 252, a good number subscribed to the *American Israelite* in 1854, even before its first issue appeared.

131. Peck, *Semi-Centennial History of Rochester*, p. 147.

132. Salo W. Baron and Jeannette M. Baron, "Palestinian Messengers in America, 1849-79," *Jewish Social Studies*, V, No. 2, 153.

133. *Ibid.*

134. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

135. *Ibid.*, V, No. 3, p. 286.

136. *The (American) Israelite*, XII (July 21, 1865), 21.

137. An editorial in *Jewish Tidings*, June 15, 1888, urged the reactivation of the local branch. "For years one has existed in Rochester in a semi-lethargic state. Two gentlemen, Elias Ettenheimer and Gabriel Wile, through their own efforts have annually collected about \$50.00 and sent it to Paris."

NOTES TO 4: FIRST JEWS FROM EAST EUROPE

1. In many newspaper references the East European congregation was called "the synagogue of the Polish Jews." It is interesting to note that this process of Jewish separatism operated before in Jewish history. For example, in England in the middle of the eighteenth century, the Spanish-Portuguese Jews and the German-Polish Jews of London were considered as members of two different "nations." See Cecil Roth, *History of the Jews in England* (Oxford, 1941), p. 222.

2. *The Occident*, XIII (December, 1855), 467.

3. S. W. Baron and J. M. Baron, "Palestinian Messengers in America," *Jewish Social Studies*, V (1943), 234-35.

4. See *City Directory*, 1869. Harris Konsinsky at 385 State St.

5. Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association. August 4, 1870, Lot 6, Range 3.

6. An account of this transaction is found in Pinkas of Beth Israel. See also Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association. Cemeteries transferred to the trustees of Beth Israel on December 26, 1874.

7. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, August 23, 1879.

8. Certificate of Incorporation, August, 1873.

9. Certificate of Incorporation. Incorporation meeting took place on February 27, 1876.

10. Certificate of Incorporation, March 27, 1877.

11. See Pinkas (Minute Book), Beth Israel Congregation.

12. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, August 23, 1879.

13. *Jewish Messenger*, XLVI (September 12, 1879), No. 11.

14. Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association, August 8, 1878. Congregation Ahavas Achim, through their trustees, purchased 250 sq. ft. for \$50. Approximately enough for 8 graves.

15. Certificate of Incorporation, September 16, 1878. The C. of I. lists

trustees whose names are similar to those recorded for Ahavas Achim Congregation in the Mt. Hope Records for August 8, 1878. We assume that the Ahavas Achim was only a temporary name used before the incorporation proceedings. Then they took the name Chevra Tillem Society.

16. Certificate of Incorporation, October 5, 1879. See Mt. Hope Records. Ahavas Achim had transferred its plot to Achi Sholom, on July 5, 1879.

17. On September 11, 1884, according to Mt. Hope Records, it sold its cemetery to David E. Mosely.

18. Certificate of Incorporation lists "The Bene Dhavidh Church" at 38 McDonald Avenue, April 22, 1888.

19. Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association. On January 24, 1887, "by the trustees of the Congregation Children of David," Lot 226, Range 3.

20. Pinkas, Beth Israel Congregation. Certificate of Incorporation, Benae Israel Church, October 14, 1883.

21. See Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association, Achi Sholom transferred their graves in Mt. Hope to David Mosely in 1884.

22. Certificate of Incorporation, July 20, 1887. *Jewish Tidings*, September 24, 1887.

23. Certificate of Incorporation, December 6, 1888. *Jewish Tidings*, September 16, 1892.

24. *Jewish Tidings*, September 16, 1892. *Rochester Directory*, 1899, Vol. 50, p. 965.

25. Several city directories list him as Coleman Bardyn Pastor, Beth Israel Synagogue.

26. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, June 28, 1886.

27. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, September 20, 1886. Rabbi Isaac Yoffe of St. Louis probably remained to serve Congregation B'nai David for a short time thereafter. See *Jewish Tidings*, September 24, 1887.

28. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, September 20, 1886.

29. *Jewish Tidings*, December 28, 1888; January 4, 1889. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 21, 1888. Rabbi Anikster returned to Chicago sometime later and became the leading Orthodox rabbi of that city.

30. *Jewish Tidings*, October 8, 1887.

31. *Ibid.*, July 19, 1889. The story relates the problems in Beth Israel. "The Orthodox Jews of this city appear anxious to have a new minister."

Rev. Mr. Levison [sic] of the Beth Israel Temple does not appear to give universal satisfaction."

32. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, July 14, 1889. *Jewish Tidings*, July 19, 1889. See also *Jewish Tidings*, March 30, 1888, where it is indicated that Dr. Kohn had received his Ph.D. degree from Yale University where he later was elected a member of the faculty. In 1878 he accepted a pulpit in Louisville, Kentucky. Refusing a nomination as American Consul in Jerusalem, he accepted a pulpit at Congregation Mishkan Israel, Boston. In 1888, he came to Congregation Beth El, in Buffalo, New York.

33. Beth Israel Minute Book.

34. Constitution of Beth Hakneses Hachodesh (Yiddish) 1889; articles No. 28, 29, 33, 34 in Jewish Division, New York Public Library.

35. The "four orthodox Jewish churches" were: Beth Israel, Beth Hakneses Hachodesh, B'nai David, and Ahavas Achim (later known as Chevra Chayteem). This did not include the Hasidic prayer room on Pryor Street.

36. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, July 17, 1895.

37. Rochester *Directory*, 1899, p. 965; 1901, p. 1016; 1906-7, p. 1117. See also Cornerstone of Vaad Hakolel Congregation at No. 4 Hanover Street, indicating the erection of the building in 1910. Also, Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, June 17, 1916.

38. This group followed the prayer book and ritual ascribed to the Ari, Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-72), cabalist and mystic. See also *Jewish Ledger* (Rochester), May 23, 1952.

39. Rochester *Herald*, September 4, 1896.

40. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, August 16, 1898.

41. Rochester *Post-Express*, October 4, 1899.

NOTES TO 5: EARLY RELATIONS

1. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 31, 1874, p. 3.

2. 10th United States Census (1880), *Population*, I, 538-41. Foreign-born in Rochester from Austria in that year are listed as 58; from Poland, 71; from Russia, 124; from Hungary, 4. Thus a total of 255 foreign-born from these sources of East European communities, of all religions are listed for 1880. Assuming the largest number of these 255 people to be Jewish, and adding a number of native-born children to these foreign-born parents, the sum could still not be much more than 500.

3. United States Census, 1890, *Population*, Part I, pp. 670-73. Of 1,085 Russian foreign-born listed, most were Jews. In addition, Aus-

trians numbered 91; Hungarians, 38; Polish, 438; of this number probably half were Jews.

4. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, June 23, 1882, p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 3. That week a Russian-Jewish family had been left stranded in the railroad depot at Buffalo. New York Jews, the editor wrote, complained that they did not have sufficient funds and were in need of getting money for this work from London Jews. He writes: "As rich as Jewish people are in this country they should not permit such heartlessness and inattention as this." The whole difficulty in the Russian refugee situation, he claimed, was "lack of charity."
6. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, June 12, 1882. Abraham Wile and Joseph Brim were elected vice-presidents and Julius Wile was elected secretary. Mrs. A. Rosenberg, Mrs. D. Rosenburg, and Mrs. J. M. Slomans were also asked to help.
7. American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, March, 1951, 272-73.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 273. Buffalo, 9; Syracuse, 19.
9. American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, March, 1951, p. 239, letter from E. S. Ettenheimer on July 17, 1882, to HIAS. He says he must send immigrants back to New York because they arrive daily in great numbers from these other places.
10. Rochester *Post-Express*, May 25, 1891; also in *Jewish Tidings*, May 29, 1891.
11. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, September 16, 1891. *Hazefirah*, 1892, p. 463. In a letter to *Hazefirah*, Solomon Schifrin, local Hebraist, described an incident in which seven Jewish families from Kaminetz arrived at Charlotte from Toronto. He lauds the quick help offered by Leopold Garson who had them released after they were arrested as vagrants on arrival. The German Jews, wrote Schifrin, rented rooms that very day for every family, while the Russian-Jewish Community "looked, sobbed, and lamented, but did nothing . . ." Schifrin writes, he explains, to vindicate the German Jews. He had read negative statements about the German Jews in the *Hazefirah* and he feels compelled to write the truth about their fine philanthropic impulses. Schifrin, we should note, was a local *Maskil* who became friendly with Dr. Landsberg and was employed by the United Jewish Charities as a collector. He worked closely with Dr. Landsberg in welfare work.
12. *Jewish Tidings*, June 5, 1891.
13. American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, March, 1951, p. 232.

14. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 31, 1888. *Jewish Tidings*, January 4, 1889.
15. *Hazefirah*, 1889, p. 148 (in Hebrew); also *Hameliz*, 1889, No. 44, p. 1.
16. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, July 14, 15, 22, and 24, 1890.
17. *Hazefirah*, 1889, p. 148 (in Hebrew).
18. *Jewish Tidings*, August 17, 1888.
19. *Ibid.*, August 24, 1888.
20. In the 1890s antiforeign sentiment found expression in the formation of the American Protective Association. While we have found material indicating the Rochester activity of the A.P.A., its principal attack was made upon Catholics. From the sources at our disposal we have found no evidence indicating anti-Jewish acts of the A.P.A. in Rochester. See Rochester *Herald*, March 19 and April 25, 1894; January 31, and February 28, 1896.

21. Rochester *Post-Express*, September 27, 1899. A quotation from a Rochester Jewish periodical known as *The Shofar* which Louis Lipsky has told the author he edited. We have found no other literary reference to it except in this quotation by the *Post-Express* columnist, "The Rochesterian."

NOTES TO 6: LIFE AMONG EAST EUROPEANS

1. See Harold W. Sanford, *A Century of Unitarianism in Rochester* (Rochester, N.Y., 1929).
2. *Jewish Tidings*, October 31, 1890.
3. *Ibid.*, February 5, 1887.
4. *Ibid.*, February 12, 1887.
5. *Ibid.*, March 26, 1887; June 25, 1887.
6. *Ibid.*, August 20, 1887.
7. *Ibid.*, June 8, 1888; September 21, 1888.
8. *Hazefirah*, 1889, pp. 152-53.
9. *Jewish Tidings*, January 18, 1889. *Hazefirah*, 1889, pp. 152-53.
10. Certificate of Incorporation, 1890. *Jewish Tidings*, July 19, 1889.
11. *Hazefirah*, 1889, pp. 153, 219-20.
12. *Jewish Tidings*, November 1, 1889. Blake McKelvey, "Private Educational Enterprise Since the Mid-Century," Rochester Historical Society, *Publications*, XVII, 175; Certificate of Incorporation, April 14, 1896—Rochester Hebrew Religious School, County Clerk, Monroe County.
13. Two conflicting reasons were supplied the author. One reason

advanced was the fact that the elders of the congregation found the name of Jesus Christ mentioned in a text used for the study of Jewish history. The invitation by the members of the Judean Club to young ladies to join their meetings and the institution of occasional dances have been suggested as other reasons for the rupture of relations. In any case, it is apparent that the adult leadership of the congregation was still indifferent to the cultural and recreational needs of the teen-agers.

14. *Hazefirah*, 1891, p. 15. Letter by Solomon Schifrin.
15. *Jewish Tidings*, February 12, 1887.
16. *Ibid.*, February 25, 1887.
17. Certificate of Incorporation, October 9, 1893, County Clerk, Monroe County.
18. *Jewish Tidings*, January 18, 1889.
19. The foregoing account was compiled by the author from a series of interviews with a number of early East European settlers.
20. *Jewish Tidings*, March 12, 1887; February 24, 1888; January 18, 1889.
21. *Ibid.*, March 16, 1888.
22. *Ibid.*, January 17, 1890.
23. *Ibid.*, October 12, 1888.
24. *Ibid.*, June 4, 1887.
25. *Ibid.*, June 4, 1887; February 28, 1890.
26. Quoted in *Jewish Tidings*, March 22, 1889.
27. *Ibid.*, February 28, 1890. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, II, 261-72.
28. *Jewish Tidings*, March 12, 1887. Solomon Finkelstein of the Beth Israel Congregation.
29. *Ibid.*, November 1, 1889.
30. *Ibid.*, March 2, 1888.
31. Personal statement given the writer by Mr. Abraham Davidson.

NOTES TO 7: TOWARD SYSTEMATIC REFORM

1. Isaac A. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 12. See also *Israelitische Wochenschrift*, 1873, No. 19, p. 150. Reference is made here to the continuation of this practice by Dr. Max Landsberg, in 1873. The *Wochenschrift* indicates that the American Jewish press was up in arms about this irregular procedure.
2. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 12.
3. *Jewish Messenger*, Vol. XXVIII (August 19, 1870), No. 8.
4. Certificate of Incorporation, Congregation Aitz Rah Non, October 16, 1870. County Clerk, Monroe County, New York.

5. *The (American) Israelite*, XXI (July, 1873), 6.
6. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 11. Personal statements of several descendants of the founders corroborate this.
7. *The (American) Israelite*, XXI (July, 1873), 6.
8. *The (American) Israelite*, XVII (March, 1871), No. 38, 7.
9. Landsberg, *Ritual for Jewish Worship*, pp. i-ii.
10. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh Congregation, April 27, 1873. David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, p. 498. Philipson describes the Einhorn prayer book, originally published in 1856, as having the greater part of the ritual in the vernacular and as containing many changes in the Hebrew text.
11. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 12.
12. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, October 20, 1878.
13. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 12.
14. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, July 1, 1883.
15. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, September 2, 1883. "The secretary was instructed to notify Mr. Cardoses and Mr. J. Levy, and all visitors to the Temple during divine services, that they are requested to remove their hats according to the rule of the congregation."
16. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 13.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, January, 1874.
19. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh. Letter from Dr. Landsberg to the President and Board of Trustees of Berith Kodesh Congregation, October 4, 1884.
20. *Jewish Messenger*, Vol. XXXX (August 11, 1876), No. 6.
21. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, September 16, 1876.
22. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, December 3, 1882.
23. *Jewish Tidings*, May 28, 1887.
24. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh. On April 13, 1879, at the semiannual meeting of the congregation a motion to join as members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was tabled rather than precipitate a struggle. This information conflicts with the record of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations which indicates that Berith Kodesh had joined its organization as early as 1875.
25. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, January 1, 1880.
26. An echo of this problem is found in an editorial comment in *Jewish Tidings*, January 23, 1891. Martin Beir, District Deputy of B'nai B'rith, had in a speech made membership in the lodge a test of devotion to Judaism. The *Tidings* objects, claiming that synagogue worship (especially if on Sunday) is a greater desideratum.

27. *Jewish Tidings*, March 5, 1887.
28. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, January, 1874.
29. *Ibid.*, September 7, 1884. The constitutional provisions were often amended. In 1894, they were changed to read: "If a member in good standing requests the services of a minister of the congregation for himself or unmarried children, application must be made to the president, who shall execute a certificate free of charge. A certificate may be had with consulting the Board of Trustees to non-members." Minute Book, amendments to the By-Laws, 1894.
30. *Jewish Tidings*, September 27, 1889.
31. *Ibid.*, March 5, 1887.
32. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, January 7, 1883.
33. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, January 7, 1883. The resolution did appear in the *American Israelite* on January 12, 1883. We were not able to locate it in the *Jewish Messenger*.
34. *Jewish Messenger*, June 1, 1883.
35. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, July 1, 1883.
36. Landsberg, *Ritual for Jewish Worship*, Foreword.
37. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 16, 1883.
38. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1883.
39. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, December 16, 1883. *Jewish Messenger*, December 21, 1883.
40. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, January 14, 1884; *Jewish Messenger*, January 18, 1884. This report claims that Reader S. Mannheimer of Berith Kodesh resigned when English ritual was adopted; Samuel S. Cohon, "The History of Hebrew Union College," American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, XL (September, 1950), 43.
- Dr. Mannheimer made frequent return visits to Rochester and wrote about his impressions in the *American Israelite*. See *Jewish Tidings*, August 22, 29; September 26; October 10, 1890.
41. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, January 21, 1884.
42. *Jewish Messenger*, January 25, 1884. *The (American) Israelite*, Vol. XXX (1884), No. 30; No. 31, p. 5. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, January 21, 1884.
43. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, January 21, 1884.
44. Letter is dated October 4, 1884.
45. Occasionally in the late 1880s Dr. Landsberg did preach in German. This was rare and usually was given on one of the Harvest Festivals when few of the younger members were present. *Jewish Tidings*, April 6, 1888; September 21, 1888.

46. *Jewish Messenger*, September 27, 1878. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 103.

47. William F. Peck, *Semi-Centennial History of Rochester*, p. 292-293. *City Directory*, 1870-1884.

48. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, April 18, 1883.

49. *Ibid.*, February 23, 1884. A lengthy description of Moll's sermon at the Franklin Square Synagogue. Apparently, then, Moll was rabbi of the Etz Chayim congregation in 1884.

50. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 103. Blake McKelvey, "The Jews of Rochester: A Contribution to Their History During the Nineteenth Century," American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, No. 60, Part I, p. 69.

51. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, November 19, 1885.

52. *Jewish Tidings*, October 8, 1887.

53. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1888.

54. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, May 23, 1886. Moll began his duties at Berith Kodesh in June, 1886.

55. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, November 19, 1885.

56. Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association. On September 11, 1884, Moseley purchased from the old, disbanded Orthodox congregation Ache Sholem a bare 250 square feet, enough for approximately ten graves. This was located at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Range 3, Lot 34.

57. Personal statement to the author by Abraham Davidson, who recalls obliging Ettenheimer on several occasions. Davidson claims that "Ettenheimer's minyan" did not continue after 1892.

58. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, November 19, 1885.

59. *Ibid.*, March 15, 1886.

60. Two years later on January 21, 1889, the *Jewish Tidings* was incorporated. Certificate of Incorporation, County Clerk's Office, Monroe County, N.Y.

61. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, pp. 95-96.

62. *Jewish Tidings*, February 5, 1887.

63. *Ibid.*, February 22, 1889.

64. *Ibid.*, October 5, 1888. By November 28, 1890, its masthead boasted: "This paper has a larger circulation than any other Jewish publication in America!"

65. *Ibid.*, April 20, 1888.

66. However, the *Tidings* did not remain consistent on this question. In 1893, it editorialized: "the movement for the establishment of Sunday services does not contemplate the abandonment of the Jewish Sab-

bath. The Jewish Sabbath may be observed as well on Sunday as on Saturday. It is the institution, not the day, that is of consequence."

" . . . Four years ago the *Tidings* was the single advocate of Sunday services among the Jewish journals of the country. Now there are five journalistic supporters of the movement. The change must come!" *Jewish Tidings*, January 20, 1893.

67. *Jewish Tidings*, April 11, 1890.

68. *Ibid.*, May 2, 1890. In October and November, 1890, the *Jewish Tidings* conducted a vigorous campaign for Sunday services. Coupon blanks were printed in the issues of these months, accompanied by the request that people indicate their "vote" in favor of Sunday services. This was done in order that "the Jewish people of Rochester, regardless of whether or not they are members of the Congregation, and regardless of age . . . may notify the trustees of their sympathy with the movement." *Ibid.*, November 21, 1890. In the same issue the editors wax so enthusiastic over their plan that they admonish: ". . . if it be a question between Friday evening and Sunday morning, there can be but one solution—we must have the Sunday lectures even at the expense of abolishing those on Friday evening."

69. *Ibid.*, May 2, 1890; November 28, 1890.

70. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, April 13, 1895.

71. *Ibid.*, October 3, 1897.

72. *Ibid.*, March 5, 1899.

73. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1899. According to Philipson, in 1907, there were thirteen congregations in the country who conducted Sunday services in New York, Rochester, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Atlanta. Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, p. 505. For a complete discussion of the *Tidings'* viewpoint on Sunday-Sabbath see, Stuart E. Rosenberg, "The *Jewish Tidings* and the Sunday Services Question," *American Jewish Historical Society, Publications*, June, 1953.

74. *Jewish Tidings*, May 15, 1891.

75. It is interesting to note that the word "Hebrew" was used by those reformists (like Isaac Mayer Wise and his Hebrew Union College) who wanted to indicate that here Jews were only a religious group; they abhorred using the word "Jew" for fear that it indicated a people, a nation or a race. In Rochester, however, the words "Hebrew" and "Jew" were obviously interpreted in reverse fashion.

In an abstract of a lecture by Dr. Landsberg on "Hebrew, Israelite and Jew" in *Jewish Tidings*, January 16, 1891, Landsberg opines: "the Hebrew nationality is dead, has been dead for eighteen centuries,

never again to be revived. . . . The only bond which holds us together is our religion, which is not called Hebraism, or Israeletism, but Judaism. . . . When this end is accomplished [Messianic prophecy]. . . . Both Christian and Jew will be merged into the common name of man."

76. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, 1891. Throughout the year references to this problem are listed.

77. *Jewish Tidings*, December 17, 1887.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1888.

80. *Ibid.*, July 19, 1889.

81. *Ibid.*

82. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, September 26, 1894.

83. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 34. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, June 1, 1894.

84. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 40.

NOTES TO 8: SOCIAL INTEGRATION

1. *Jewish Tidings*, May 10, 1889.

2. Blake McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 117.

3. *Jewish Tidings*, February 24, 1888; July 27, 1888; September 14, 1888; May 24, 1889; April 19, 1889; August 16, 1889; May 9, 1890.

4. See United States Passport issued on July 9, 1862, to Henry M. Seligman, reputedly the first Jewish boy born in Rochester. A copy of a letter the lad sent to his family on his voyage is in the hands of the author. He writes that he left New York for Liverpool on the steamer *City of Baltimore*. He arrived in England after "thirteen days at sea." In Paris he met Mr. Moses Hays of Rochester, who was also abroad on a trip.

5. Copies of these published letters are available in typescript at the University of Rochester library.

6. *Jewish Tidings*, May 28, 1887; August 16, 1889; April 11, 1890.

7. *Ibid.*, March 22, 1889.

8. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, October 30, 1873.

9. *Ibid.*

10. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 173. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, October 30, 1873.

11. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 179.

12. *Jewish Tidings*, May 31, 1889; June 7, 1889.

13. *Ibid.*, January 31, 1890. Certificate of Incorporation, Eureka Club, 1882, County Clerk, Monroe County, New York.

14. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, December 1, 1882.
15. See appraisal attached to Certificate of Incorporation, Eureka Club, County Clerk, Monroe County, New York.
16. See Annual Financial Reports attached to Certificate of Incorporation, Eureka Club, County Clerk, Monroe County, New York.
17. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, March 14, 1887.
18. *Jewish Tidings*, January 31, 1890.
19. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, March 14, 1887.
20. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1882; March 14, 1887.
21. *Jewish Tidings*, February 12, 1887. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, March 25, 1887.
22. *Jewish Tidings*, March 26, 1887.
23. *Ibid.*, August 23, 1889.
24. *Ibid.*, October 4, 1889.
25. *Ibid.*, December 13, 1889.
26. *Ibid.*, The Excelsior Bowling League was at full strength at this time and, as far as can be determined, consisted only of Jewish men.
27. *Ibid.*, September 7, 1888.
28. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 166. This occurred in 1872.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
30. Mr. Hickey indicated to the writer that he took lessons from Rabbi Moll before leaving for his wedding trip on the continent.
31. *Jewish Tidings*, August 27, 1887; September 6, 1889.
32. *Ibid.*, October 25, 1889.
33. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1891.
34. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, October 7, 1888.
35. *Jewish Tidings*, May 1, 1891; May 29, 1891. An amendment to the constitution to this effect was defeated by a vote of three to one. However, while we have been unable to discover the exact date of such a ruling from local sources, Philipson's testimony would lend support to the idea that women were given membership and voting rights soon thereafter. See David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, p. 509.
36. *Jewish Tidings*, March 20, 1891; May 1, 1891.
37. Isaac A. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 27. According to *Jewish Tidings*, January 27, 1893, the Berith Kodesh Sisterhood was founded on January 23, 1893. Wile is obviously in error in claiming it was founded in 1892. Wile also lists Mrs. Simon Elsner as the first president, while the *Tidings* records Mrs. R. Shatz as the first leader. Dues were fixed at ten cents a month, payable at each monthly meeting.

38. A brief summary of the history of the Rochester Section of the National Council of Jewish Women was given orally before a Council meeting in Rochester in 1938. This was compiled by Mrs. Julius A. Goldberg, Mrs. Lester M. Berlove, Mrs. Samuel Weil, Mrs. J. L. Garson, and Mrs. Henry Hays. The references here are taken from a copy of this historical sketch. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 27, indicates that the Council members took a special interest in the immigrant Jewish girls: ". . . a number of the members are appointed by the Judge of the Juvenile Court as special volunteer probation officers, who render very valuable assistance to the paid probation officers. . . ."

39. See Blake McKelvey, "Private Educational Enterprise Since the Mid-Century," Rochester Historical Society, *Publications*, Vol. XVII.

40. Dexter Perkins, "The University of Rochester; Its Place in the Civic Century," Rochester Historical Society, *Publications*, XIII, 148-150.

41. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 14. In an interview with Miss Miriam Seligman the writer learns that despite the official welcome given to women students, their presence was scoffed at by professors and students alike. It apparently took several years before the administration became reconciled to the idea of coeducation. In addition to the Misses Seligman, Marie Griesheimer also was among the first to enroll.

42. Blake McKelvey, "Woman's Rights in Rochester: A Century of Progress," *Rochester History*, X (July, 1948), Nos. 2 and 3, pp. 17-19.

43. The source of this information is Miss Miriam Seligman.

NOTES TO 9: CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS

1. Their cemetery at Mt. Hope was referred to as "Jew Ground" until about 1860. Their spiritual leader, Rabbi Tuska, was still referred to as the Israelite priest.

2. See Chapter II for the role of German Jews in Rochester's fraternal and civic organizations in the early 1850s.

3. *Israelitische Wochenschrift*, 1873, No. 19, p. 150.

4. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, November 27, 1874.

5. *Jewish Messenger*, December 1, 1893.

6. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, March 5, 1900. The letter is signed by Max Lowenthal, president, and Julius Michaels, vice-president.

7. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, January 23, 1899.

8. *Rochester Herald*, February 27, 1899.

9. *Rochester Herald*, October 12, 1899. On this date Brown invited Philip Jackson, Rochester's leading Socialist of that time, to address the men's club of Plymouth Church.

10. *Ibid.*, October 2, 1899. In a lengthy statement published in the Rochester *Herald*, Brown indicated: "A change in our economic system demands a change in our political system . . . it must come through a political party, through the inauguration of the cooperative commonwealth. . . . The emancipation of all classes is involved in the destruction of capitalism."
11. *Ibid.*, December 11, 1900.
12. *Ibid.*, October 9, 1901.
13. The national union, the American Federation of Labor, had in 1896, following a local strike in the clothing industry the year before, declared a boycott of Rochester's clothing manufacturers. Thereupon the clothing manufacturers refused to hire union labor for a period of several years. The air was filled with threats and counter threats during this violent period in the history of Rochester's clothing industry.
14. Minute Book, B'rith Kodesh, May 5, 1901.
15. It is doubtful whether Dr. Landsberg ever openly sided with the workers of the clothing factories in the struggles with the manufacturers in the 1880s. In any event, Landsberg was not regarded by the clothing workers as being a champion of workers' rights. However, Dr. Emil G. Hirsch of Chicago was considered by the clothing workers to be one of their staunch defenders. See *Documentary History of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, 1914-1916*, p. 153.
- On the other hand, Landsberg, a Republican, voted for Grover Cleveland in 1884, and was active in campaigning for his reelection in 1888. Despite an attack upon him by the officers of Beth Israel (the Orthodox congregation) for "mixing religion with politics" he held his ground, and continued his speechmaking in behalf of Cleveland. See *Jewish Tidings*, October 16, November 16, and December 14, 1888.
16. Ironically enough the annual Thanksgiving interfaith service held that November did include Reverend William T. Brown. The Universalists, Unitarians, and members of B'rith Kodesh joined with Mr. Brown and his congregation at the Universalist Church in the annual service. Apparently they had decided not to press the resolution adopted the previous May. See *Rochester Herald*, November 29, 1901.
17. Minute Book, Berith Kodesh, June 3, 1894. Letters of thanks were sent to St. Peter's Church for their courtesy, as well as to the Protestant ministers and guests who brought the greetings of their respective groups.
18. *Jewish Tidings*, November 1, 1889. A large number of Jewish benefactors are listed here. Local Jews joined other public-spirited

Rochesterians two years before in assisting the victims of the Mississippi floods. *Jewish Tidings*, February 12, 1889.

19. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1888.

20. William F. Peck, *Semi-Centennial History of Rochester*, I, 132.

21. *Jewish Tidings*, January 18, 1888.

22. *Ibid.*, February 12, 1887.

23. *Ibid.*, May 18, 1888.

24. *Ibid.* The italics are the author's.

25. *Ibid.*, May 17, 1889.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, July 5, 1889. While the quotation is taken from an editorial in the *Jewish Tidings*, it seems clear that these were the sentiments of leading Jews of the Reform community. This was the time when many of them were moving out of the old sections, heavily populated by Jews, into the newer, sparsely settled sections of the city.

28. It took a generation for the process to be completed. By 1920, however, the neighborhoods in the southeastern part of the city to which only a few Jews had ventured to move in the 1890s had become "Jewish neighborhoods."

NOTES TO 10: ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

1. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 225.

2. United States Census 1870, I, 798; III, 702. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 103. The clothing workers received an annual wage of \$301. Estimates of the number of clothing workers at that time vary from the 1,416 listed by the United States Census to 5,000 according to local sources in the industry.

3. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 225; *Jewish Tidings*, April 26, 1889.

4. *Jewish Tidings*, May 1, 1891.

5. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1888; April 26, 1889; December 13, 1889.

6. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1887; December 20, 1889.

7. *Ibid.*, April 26, 1889.

8. Among them was Elias S. Ettenheimer, a director of the Merchants Bank and later of the Union Bank. *Jewish Tidings*, March 5, 1887. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, January 12, 1892; *Jewish Tidings*, May 1, 1891. Henry Michaels was president of the Empire State Insurance Company.

9. *Jewish Tidings*, December 23, 1887; January 20, 1888.

10. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, January 12, 1892.

11. Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York, 1931), I, 10-18, Miss Goldman refers to Mr. Leopold Garson, head of Garson Meyer and Company. For a brief sketch of Leopold Garson see Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 85.
12. Natalie F. Hawley, The Labor Movement in Rochester, 1880-1898, M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Rochester, p. 203. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 214.
13. *Jewish Tidings*, August 31, 1888; September 7, 1888.
14. Hawley, The Labor Movement in Rochester, p. 207.
15. James L. Brewer, "Centennial History of Organized Labor in Rochester," *Publications*, Rochester Historical Society, XIII (1934), 400-404.
16. *Jewish Tidings*, April 10, 1891.
17. Hawley, The Labor Movement in Rochester, p. 207.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Jewish Tidings*, May 1, 1891. The editors devote a great deal of space to a series of columns lauding the leaders of the Clothiers Exchange. Under the title "These Men Are Famous," the history of the Exchange and its leading personalities are sketched. The strong sympathy the editors felt for the cause of the owners is demonstrated in this issue, as indeed it is in many others. See especially *Jewish Tidings*, March 13, March 27, and April 10, 1891.
20. Hawley, The Labor Movement in Rochester, p. 207.
21. For a brief insight into this aspect of the problem see Goldman, *Living My Life*, pp. 50-51. See also Hawley, The Labor Movement in Rochester, pp. 207-11.
22. Local 47 was organized in 1893. Hawley, The Labor Movement in Rochester, pp. 214-20.
23. *Jewish Tidings*, March 13, 1891.
24. *Ibid.*, April 10, 1891.
25. A large number of the clothiers were asked to serve on special committees of the Chamber of Commerce. Among others, Isaac Wile and Max Lowenthal served on a Committee for the Promotion of Trade; Joseph Cauffman served on the Committee for Public Improvements; Bernard Rothschild served on the Committee for Railroads and Transportation; Henry Michaels and I. A. Baum served on the Committee on Legislation. *Jewish Tidings*, February 7, 1890.
26. See Chapter VIII for a discussion of the help given the fund-raising program for coeducation by Rochester's Jewish women. It must be noted that a number of Russian-Jewish women were also helpful to the committee in charge. Tillie Berger Rose, a leader of that commu-

nity, worked closely with Mrs. Seligman in raising money for the program. She would "tour" the streets of the East European Jewish neighborhood, calling on friends who gave her small sums for the cause.

27. We know that Minnie Hochstein, Marie Griesheimer, Miriam and Julia Seligman, Annie Rosenberg, and May Ethel Rosenthal were among this group. See Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 14.

28. *Jewish Tidings*, January 3, 1890. At this time, of the 176 students at the University of Rochester, one is reported to be Jewish.

29. *Ibid.*, February 19, 1887.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Local young Jews were not numerous enough to warrant special Jewish enclaves on the campus. The few Jews who did join fraternities, however, were mostly members of Delta Epsilon. See *Jewish Tidings*, February 19, 1887.

32. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 15. *Jewish Tidings*, July 5, 1889.

33. *Jewish Tidings*, April 16, 1887. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 15.

34. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 15.

35. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 14. *Jewish Tidings*, June 21, July 5, 1889.

36. *Jewish Tidings*, June 9, 1893. The editorial speaks of the "twenty thousand voters of Jewish faith in this city." This is undoubtedly a misprint or a gross exaggeration. At the time there were probably no more than two thousand Jews in Rochester who were permitted to vote. The statement attributed to Dr. Felix Adler was apparently a reaction to the rejection by the Union League Club of New York city of Mr. Theodore Seligman, son of Jesse Seligman, on account of his religion. A storm of protests against the Republican Party broke out. The *Jewish Tidings* carried a special story of the incident. See *Jewish Tidings*, April 21, 1893.

37. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 13. From 1879 to 1881 no Jew was a member of the Common Council.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14. *Jewish Tidings*, October 18, 1889.

39. *Jewish Tidings*, October 18, 1889.

40. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 13.

41. *Jewish Tidings*, May 7, November 12, 1887. See also William F. Peck, *History of the Police Bureau of Rochester* (Rochester, 1903).

42. McKelvey, *Rochester, the Flower City*, p. 271.

43. *Jewish Tidings*, July 20, 1888; October 18, 1889. Gabriel Wile was appointed deputy collector of customs in 1887 and served until 1893. See *Official Register of the United States*, 1887, Vol. I, p. 193; 1889,

Vol. I, p. 201; 1891, Vol. I, p. 160; 1893, Vol. I, p. 181. See also *Rochester City Directory*, 1887, p. 665; 1893, p. 896.

David Hays was appointed to the Board of Civil Service Examiners on December 16, 1884, and served until 1887. See *Proceedings of Common Council of the City of Rochester*, 1884-85, p. 251; also in *Rochester City Directory*, 1885, p. 634; 1886, p. 542; 1887, p. 635.

Joseph Cauffman served on the Board of the Park Commission for five years beginning with May 1, 1888. See *Report of the Board of Park Commission of the City of Rochester, New York, 1888-1898*, p. 73; also *Revised Charter of the City of Rochester* (Rochester, New York), 1892, pp. 255-56.

44. *Jewish Tidings*, October 26, 1888.

45. *Ibid.*, December 14, 1888. According to Louis Lipsky, whose family was active in Beth Israel, the congregation was perennially split into Republicans and Democrats. Selig Rosenbloom, a power in the congregation, was also a Republican ward leader who often "propagandized within the congregation."

46. *Ibid.*, November 16, 1888.

47. *Ibid.*, December 14, 1888.

48. A local letter writer to the Warsaw Hebrew periodical *Hazefirah* (1889, p. 148) claimed that the threats received by local Jews from the White Caps were due, in part, to articles that appeared in the *Union and Advertiser* accusing the Jews of helping to elect Harrison as president.

NOTES TO 11: PHILANTHROPY AND FRATERNITY

1. Ida Klein Richardson, *A Study in Institutional and Foster Home Care for Dependent Children*, 1938, M.A. Thesis, Typescript, Univ. of Rochester, p. 13. The first meeting of the Rochester Society took place on October 21, 1877. See also *The (American) Israelite*, XXIX (1877), 2.

2. Among the four delegates from Syracuse were Louis Marshall and Isaac H. Danziger. Rev. Dr. Sampson Falk and Sigmund Levyn were two of Buffalo's delegates. Rochester was represented by Dr. Max Landsberg, Samuel Rosenblatt, Moses Hays, and Martin Beir. *Jewish Tidings*, August 30, 1889.

3. *Jewish Tidings*, August 30, 1889.

4. County Clerk's Office, Monroe County, Certificate of Incorporation, May 25, 1881.

5. These children and the few others who joined them in the following three years were boarded in a private Rochester home at \$15 per

month per child. Richardson, *A Study in Institutional and Foster Home Care for Dependent Children*, p. 13.

6. *Jewish Tidings*, August 30, 1889.

7. At first it was expected that the Jewish Orphan Asylum would be located on Prince Street, near the University of Rochester campus. Construction was to be started in the spring of 1883. Undoubtedly complications arose in building, and it was decided that it would be easier to remodel an already existing building. See *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, October 18, 1882.

8. *Jewish Tidings*, August 30, 1889.

9. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1889.

10. *Ibid.*, February 5, 1887.

11. *Ibid.*, February 5, 1887.

12. *Ibid.*, May 4, 1888.

13. Richardson, *A Study in Institutional and Foster Home Care for Dependent Children*, p. 7.

14. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 12, 1882.

15. Wile, *History of the Jews of Rochester*, p. 25.

16. *Jewish Tidings*, January 10, 1890.

17. *Jewish Tidings*, October 5, 1888.

18. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 25. Reference is made to an article about the United Jewish Charities written for *Scribner's Magazine* (1893, pp. 121-28) by the Hon. Oscar Craig, president of the New York State Board of Charities.

19. *Jewish Tidings*, February 26, 1887. The article indicates that "everyone is admitted to the meetings and those who know of cases of distress are especially welcome."

20. *Ibid.*, October 11, 1889.

21. See report of the United Jewish Charities published in the *Jewish Tidings*, October 11, 1889. See also *United Jewish Charities, Report*, September, 1901, in the papers of Dr. Max Landsberg, Local History Division, Rochester Public Library.

22. *Jewish Tidings*, October 11, 1889.

23. See *United Jewish Charities, Report*, September, 1901.

24. Dr. Landsberg's own description, quoted in Wile, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

25. *Jewish Tidings*, February 27, 1891.

26. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 21.

27. *Jewish Tidings*, June 14, 1889. There was apparently no response to this telegraphed request. See also *Ibid.*, June 7, 21, 1889.

28. *Jewish Tidings*, November 16, 1888.

29. *Ibid.*, July 26, 1889.

30. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 30, 1874.
31. See Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, pp. 19-20.
32. It was founded in 1849. B'nai B'rith preceded it since it was organized in 1843.
33. Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association; on July 23, 1873, the trustees of Rochester Continental Lodge No. 45, I.O.F.S.I. and their successors purchased 1,500 square feet on Range 3, lot 8, at \$300.
34. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 30, 1874.
35. For an interesting description of the work of these lodges, statistics, and the composition of their membership, see *Jewish Tidings*, August 23, 1889. By 1885, the need for a free burial ground for poor Jews was felt. In October of that year Julius Wile, Joseph Katz, Leopold Garson, and Henry Michaels, as trustees, "purchased," for one dollar, 4,000 square feet at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Section Y, Lot 6. See Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association.
36. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 6, 1892.

NOTES TO 13: POPULATION CHANGES

1. Maurice R. Davie, *World Immigration*, p. 145.
2. *The Occident*, XII (1854), 167. A local observer writes to the editor: "Our Kahal has increased to 50 families."
3. *American Jewish Year Book*, II (1901), 190.
4. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 30, 1874.
5. Edwin A. Rumball, "Populus Rocestriensis," *The Common Good*, VII (August, 1914), 176.
6. In 1880, there were a total of 373 people listed as East or South European residents of Rochester according to the United States *Census*. The figures are as follows: Austria, 58; Poland, 71; Russia, 240; Hungary, 4. Thus, assuming the largest number of these 373 people to be Jewish and adding a number of native-born children to those who were foreign-born parents, East European Jews in Rochester in 1880 could not have numbered more than 500 souls. See United States *Tenth Census, Population*, I (1880), 538-41.
7. One may estimate that in 1890, there were 3,000 Jews of German extraction as compared to 2,000 Jews from East and South Europe. The United States *Eleventh Census* (1890) Part I, pp. 670-673, shows the following East European foreign born in Rochester. Austria, 91; Russia, 1,085; Hungary, 38; Poland, 438; a total of 1,652. Assuming with the Census editors that most of those listed in this Census as "Russian" were actually Jews, and assuming that half of the others were Jews, and adding to this number to account for native-born children of these

foreign born parents, we arrive at an estimated figure of 2,000 Jews of East European extraction. It is assumed that half of this number had emigrated from 1881-1890. Thus, from 500 in 1880, the number of East European Jews jumped to 2,000 in 1890.

8. The United States *Twelfth Census, Population*, Part 1 (1900), 800-803. The following figures are given: Austria, 171; Poland (Austria), 41; Poland (Germany), 576; Poland (Russia), 444; Poland (unknown), 45; Russia, 1,777; Hungary, 32; Roumania, 2. This is a total of 3,088. Again, we may estimate that of this total, most of those designated as "Russian" or "Polish-Russian" were Jews. We see that at least 1,000 Jews from East Europe had come to Rochester from 1890 to 1900. Considering natural increase of the settled population, we note the possibility of total increase of 2,000 over the estimated 5,000 Jews given as the figure for 1890. Of this total, German-Jewish population probably remained close to the 3,000 number, thus making a total of about 4,000 Jews of East European extraction.

9. United States *Census, Population*, I (1910), 1014.

10. The United States *Census*, Part 3 (1910), 259, indicates the following population in Rochester from East European countries. Austria, 1,688; Russia, 7,148; Hungary, 415. (Poland is not listed.) This, of course, does not include American-born children of foreign parents. The Yiddish-speaking figure of 9,563 quoted above would still seem to be a reliable estimate.

11. In the decade from 1900 to 1910, Germans in Rochester began to decline numerically. In 1900, there were 15,685 Germans in Rochester compared with 14,624 in 1910. In 1890, there were 17,330 Germans in Rochester. This static, even declining situation is reflected in the population of the German Jews, as well. Edwin A. Rumball estimated, in 1914 that "in round numbers we probably have about 10,000 Jews in the city." Rumball, "Populus Rocestriensis," p. 177.

12. Beginning in 1906, a number of families came from Monastir, Yugoslavia, to Rochester, and thus began a small island community of "Turkish" or Sephardic Jews in the city. The 1920 *Census* lists only 177 people as coming from Yugoslavia. By that time then, the Sephardic community probably numbered no more than 500. For a more complete discussion see Chapter XV.

13. See United States *Census, Population*, II (1920), 1009. See also p. 967, where it is indicated that "it is possible that a large proportion of the persons reported in 1920 as Russian in mother tongue were in reality Hebrew. . . ."

14. This total is reached by adding the Yiddish-speaking group of

11,447 to the half of the Russian-speaking group. This does not include those Jews who may have listed other European languages as a mother tongue.

NOTES TO 14: ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENTS

1. Edwin A. Rumball, "Populus Rocestriensis," p. 167.
2. A statement by Mr. Isaac Adler, in 1902, quoted in *Baden Street Settlement Twenty-Fifth Anniversary*, 1926.
3. Baden Street Settlement, *Annual Report*, October, 1925.
4. Rochester *Times*, November 18, 1912. Three of the largest factories were said to employ 2,428 persons or 27 percent of the 8,859 persons employed in the manufacture of wholesale clothing in Rochester.
5. Rochester *Herald*, December 23, 1903; November 14, 1904. *Post-Express*, July 5, 1904; August 11, 1904; October 1, 1908.
6. Rochester *Post-Express*, October 24, 1903. It is claimed that in 1903 there were about 200 clothing shops in Rochester. By 1911, there were 244 such establishments, Rochester *Herald*, April 8, 1911. A 1912 source claims "about 300 clothing or tailoring factories in Rochester" or 27 percent of the 1,450 factories then in the city. See Rochester Chamber of Commerce, *Publications*, 1912, p. 6.
7. Dr. George Goler, local health officer, testified in Rochester before the Wagner Joint Investigating Committee on November 28, 1911, reporting these "deplorable" conditions. See Rochester *Times*, November 18, 1912. For an attempted refutation of these statements see "An Investigation of the Conditions Existing in the Clothing Factories of Rochester, N.Y." in Rochester Chamber of Commerce, *Publications*, 1912.
8. Rochester Chamber of Commerce, *Publications*, 1912, pp. 38-39.
9. One of its outstanding meetings was held on December 21, 1907, at Odd Fellows Hall, when over 350 persons gathered to hear Mr. Abramowitz, a Bundist delegate from Russia, on the tenth anniversary of the Bund's founding. Among those present at this meeting were members of the Polish Socialist Association, the Saengerbund (German Singing Society) and the Socialist Party. See *Rochester Socialist*, December 28, 1907. See also Rochester *Post-Express*, December 14, 1905.
10. The data for the foregoing account of the origin of the Workmen's Circle is taken from the Yiddish brochure *Twenty-fifth Jubilee, Branch 27, Workmen's Circle* (Rochester, New York, 1928); in addition, veteran members of the Workmen's Circle supplied several details to the author.
11. Rochester *Herald*, January 23, 1913. The vote was 2,644 to 228.
12. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, September 29, 1903; October

10, 1903. Rochester *Herald*, November 7, 1903; December 23, 1903; December 24, 1903. Rochester *Post-Express*, July 5, 1904; July 7, 1904; October 1, 1908. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, November 30, 1910.

13. Rochester *Herald*, February 3, 1913.

14. *Ibid.*, February 6 and February 7, 1913.

15. *Ibid.*, February 6, 1914. In the cemetery of Vaad Hakolel Congregation on Stone Road a memorial stone "erected by the Rochester Brotherhood of Tailors" stands over her grave. At the top of the stone is the following legend: "Lost Her Life in the Struggle of 1913."

16. Rochester *Herald*, March 20, 1913.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Ismar Elbogen, *A Century of Jewish Life*, p. 373.

19. See *Official Canvass and Statement*, Board of County Canvassers, Monroe County, New York, 1900-1918. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, October 23, 1915.

20. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, November 8, 1917.

21. *Documentary History of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America*, 1914-1916, p. 126. Also, James L. Brewer, "Centennial History of Organized Labor in Rochester," p. 419.

22. A full session at the Rochester convention dealt with Jewish sufferers in World War I. Convention delegates also received copies of a "Black Book" which dealt with the conditions of the Jews in Russia. *Documentary History of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America*, 1914-1916, p. 126.

23. See Rochester City Directories for the years 1900-1910, under family names of Cohen, Cohn, Levi, Levy, and Levin.

24. Rochester City Directories for the years 1911-1925, under family names of Cohen, Cohn, Levi, Levy, and Levin.

25. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 16.

26. These figures were compiled by the author from United States *Census of Manufactures*, 1914, Vol. 1, p. 1045. *Biennial Census of Manufactures*, 1921, pp. 1581-82; 1923, p. 1441.

27. *Biennial Census of Manufactures* (1921), pp. 1581-82.

28. Rochester *City Directory*, LII (1902), 945-48, 964; LXI (1911); 1186, 1213.

29. Rochester *City Directory*, LXVI (1916), 1373, 1404; LXXVI (1926), 2112, 2134.

30. See *Reports and Publications* of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce from 1900 to 1925, in Local History Division, Rochester Public Library.

31. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 64.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
35. Based upon interview with Mr. Jesse Horwitz. See also Rochester *Evening Journal*, October 25, 1932; Rochester *Times Union*, April 23, 1949.
36. Much of this information was gathered from personal interviews with members of the Forman family and company executives. See also Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, March 24, 1951.
37. Rochester *Journal*, "Neisner Edition," April 9, 1936.
38. Rochester *Times Union*, March 8, 1927. *This Week in Rochester*, VIII (March 5-12, 1927), No. 10.
39. Rochester *Times Union*, March 8, 1927.

NOTES TO 15: RELIGIOUS LIFE

1. Rochester *Post-Express*, October 22, 1903. Rabbi Caplan and his Benai David Congregation were instrumental in organizing the Ezras Israel Aid Society. This group felt "that the immigrant has enough to do just supporting families (sometimes families in Europe) without being saddled by debt." See also Rochester *Herald*, May 16, 1903, indicating the Orthodox effort in behalf of Kishenev pogrom sufferers.
2. M. A. Ginzburg, *Hamoriah* (in Hebrew), p. 46.
3. *Hayehudi*, 1908, No. 13, pp. 3-4.
4. *Ibid.*, 1910, No. 21, p. 16.
5. Rochester *Post-Express*, August 15, 1910. Congregations B'nai David and Beth Israel stated that he had no official connection with either group. Rabbi Ginsberg, however, claimed that he was elected Chief Rabbi of all Orthodox congregations.
6. From the report (in Yiddish) of the United Rabbinical Committee, a handwritten paper in the possession of the author. See also Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, September 10, 1911.
7. The rules and regulations of the Vaad Hakashruth were printed and ordered posted in all Orthodox congregations. The pertinent rules follow:
 1. Henceforth, let no dealer in kosher meat engage a *shohet* to slaughter for his needs other than one appointed by the *Vaad Hakashruth* with the approval of the rabbi of the city. Let no *shohet* slaughter any head of cattle or fowl in the city or its environs without permission of the *Vaad* and the rabbi. Should any *shohet* transgress and slaughter without this consent, let the meat of his slaughtering be regarded as forbidden food.
 2. Every dealer in cattle or fowl meat is required to pay to the

treasury of the *Vaad*, to meet the costs of the *shohetim*, the inspectors, and such like, according to the amount that shall be set: and the *Vaad* shall pay the salaries of the *shohetim* and the overseers, according to the figures that shall be set. In this way a prime evil will be removed; the *shohetim* will no longer be dependent upon the meat dealers, but upon the community and the rabbi. As *shohetim* let there be appointed men who are competent in their work and God-fearing, in accordance with the practice prevalent in the diaspora, and in keeping with the laws written in the *Shulhan Arukh* (Code of Jewish Law)."

8. Rochester *Herald*, February 14, 1913.

9. For the dates of organization of the Ahavas Achim Congregation and the coming of Rabbi Levin, see Rochester *Directory*, 1913, p. 1421. See also Rochester *Herald*, February 14, 1913. Rabbi Levin left Rochester in 1924, and was succeeded by Rabbi Hersh Adams. See Rochester *Directory*, 1923-24, p. 39; 1924-25, p. 39.

10. The above account was given orally to the author by Mr. Harris Nusbaum. The only written account of the *Vaad*'s fiscal operation available to the author is the financial report listed in Jeremiah J. Berman's *Shehitah*. From February 27, 1934, to February 26, 1935, the *Vaad*'s disbursements included the following: \$15,994 was paid to 8 *shohetim*; \$3,660 to four rabbis; \$1,428 to two overseers; and \$540 to a secretary. The *Vaad* that year contributed \$5,327.93 to the Rochester Hebrew School (Talmud Torah); \$520 to the Beth Hatevilah; \$280 to the Workmen's Circle Yiddish School.

11. By 1922, the average memberships of each of these congregations was still less than 50. See Study of the Social and Recreational Facilities and Needs Relating to the Jewish Community of Rochester, N.Y., Jewish Welfare Board, 1922.

12. For the congregations listed above, see Certificates of Incorporation, County Clerk, Monroe County, New York.

13. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, September 10, 1903.

14. Rochester *Post-Express*, March 10, 1903.

15. Rochester *Herald*, May 29, 1911.

16. This took place sometime in 1913. Rochester *Directory*, 1913-1914, LXIII, 1421.

17. Rochester *Herald*, April 2, May 29, 1911. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 43.

18. The data regarding Rabbi Blechman's tenure were obtained from personal statements supplied the author by men who were in Beth Israel at the time, as well as a statement from the late Rabbi Blechman contained in a letter dated June 6, 1951.

19. Dr. Lauterbach succeeded Ephraim Feldman, professor of Tal-

mud, who died in November, 1910. Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, president of the College, made the appointment. See Samuel S. Cohon, "The History of Hebrew Union College," American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, XL (September, 1950), 43.

20. In nearby Syracuse, for example, Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz, first graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary, came to the Adath Ye shurun Synagogue as early as 1894.

21. The data above relating to the inner developments of Beth Israel from 1911 to 1916 are taken from personal statements supplied the author by several men who were active members at that time. In addition, personal statements were given the author by Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, who lived through that period as a young boy, and Rabbi Paul Chertoff, who ministered to the congregation during those years.

22. Minute Book, Temple Beth El, first entry, 1915.

23. Minute Book, Temple Beth El, March 19, 1915.

24. *Ibid.*, November 28, 1915.

25. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, November 29, 1932.

26. Minute Book, Temple Beth El, November 30, 1915.

27. *Ibid.*, January 13, 1916.

28. *Ibid.*, March 4, 1916.

29. *Ibid.*, Temple Beth El, April 6, 16, 1916. Souvenir Program, Temple Beth El, May 20, 1917.

30. Minute Book, June 12, 1916.

31. *Ibid.*, July 18, August 17, November 23, 1916.

32. Minute Book, Temple Beth El, December 18, 1916.

33. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1916.

34. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, September 16, 1916.

35. Dr. Blau and Cantor Bender were elected as of April 1, 1917. The former was engaged at a salary of \$3,000 per annum, the latter at \$1,500 per annum. Mr. Katz received \$1,200 per annum. Minute Book, Temple Beth El, March 15, 1917.

36. The officers were: Isaac Joffe, president; Louis Shulman, vice-president; Jacob H. Goldstein, recording secretary; Alfred Hart, financial secretary; and Louis Frankel, treasurer.

37. Souvenir Program, Temple Beth El, May 20, 1917.

38. Mr. Cohen was elected president on March 12, 1919 and Rabbi Minkin was called on June 20, 1919. See Minute Book, Temple Beth El for above dates.

39. Minute Book, Temple Beth El, June 20, 1920.

40. *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, 1917-1942*, Temple Beth El.

41. Minute Book, Temple Beth El, October 13, 1925. A financial

statement showed expenses of \$21,095, an income of \$20,882, leaving a deficit of \$273. A breakdown of membership is given. There were, in 1925, 98 members who paid annual dues of \$25; 15 paid \$50; 13 paid \$75; 47 paid \$100; 12 paid \$125; 2 paid \$150; one paid \$175; 4 paid \$200; 2 paid \$300; one paid \$400; one paid \$470. In addition 99 seats were allotted to people who "purchased seats" as nonmember seat-holders.

42. *Ibid.*, October 25, 1926. Reference made to the custom of joint Men's Clubs meetings.

43. *Ibid.*, Temple Beth El, April 18, September 17, 1923. A lengthy discussion of the problem. Mr. Alfred Hart suggested that Sabbath morning services begin at 8:15 A.M. and conclude at 10 A.M., "to give a chance to business men to attend services." The plan apparently produced no positive results and so in September the time for the Sabbath service was changed back to 9 A.M.

A report in the Minute Book, October 25, 1926, indicates that the question of poor attendance at religious services had agitated the Board for a long time. This time another procedure was advocated: "each member of the Board was urged to attend and to bring a few others with him."

44. Some of the material on which this account of Beth El's development is based was obtained from facts and opinions supplied the author by Rabbi Charles Bender, who served as cantor of Beth El during this period.

45. Of these only the last three were incorporated. See their Certificates of Incorporation in files of County Clerk, Monroe County. Information on the dates of organization of first two congregations from Rochester *Directory*, LVI (1915-1916), 1417.

46. The deed was recorded on July 9, 1895. See Liber No. 555 of Deeds, p. 325, County Clerk, Monroe County.

47. The deed was recorded on July 11, 1895. See Liber No. 555 of Deeds, p. 337, County Clerk, Monroe County.

48. Deed recorded July 16, 1895. Liber No. 555 of Deeds, pp. 366-367, County Clerk, Monroe County.

49. On August 4, 1870, Beth Israel acquired the plot at Mt. Hope Cemetery previously owned by its parent congregation, Sheves Achim. On May 15, 1885, Congregation B'nai Aviezer acquired its plot at Mt. Hope Cemetery (Range 3, Lot 26) which was still in its possession when the congregation changed its name to Beth Hakneses Hachodesh. See Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association.

50. Deed as recorded March 24, 1902. See Liber No. 640 of Deeds, pp. 640-43.

51. Deed as recorded January 16, 1920. See Liber No. 1081 of Deeds, p. 265.
52. Deed as recorded December 14, 1925. See Liber No. 1345 of Deeds, p. 278.
53. Deed as recorded April 10, 1922. See Liber No. 1164 of Deeds, p. 122.
54. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 25, 1914.
55. Records, Mt. Hope Cemetery Association. Congregation Beth El was permitted to have burials made in its future plot as early as 1933. However, it did not legally acquire the plot until November 16, 1937.
56. Rochester *Herald*, February 14, 1913. A heated dispute among Jewish butchers leveling serious charges against Rabbi Sadowsky and the Vaad Hakashruth is reported. It is claimed that "fully 1,000 men gathered in Beth Hamedrash Hagodel Synagogue to discuss the issue!"
57. Certificate of Incorporation, County Clerk, 1919, Monroe County, New York.
58. In national Orthodox circles Rochester is still mentioned as being, like Baltimore, one of the few medium-sized cities outside of the metropolitan centers in which Jewish traditions were widely observed, during the period treated above. In scores of discussions with the children of East European immigrants, the author has been informed that the "religious motive" was one of the really compelling factors in the migration of their parents to Rochester.
59. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, July 24, 1903. This common, legal concern of Sunday work was an insistently annoying one to the pious Jews. In time, however, the legal authorities closed their eyes to the situation and did not interfere with the Sunday labors of the Jewish-owned establishments.
60. Rochester *Herald*, July 28, 1906.
61. The boardinghouse was meant to accommodate Jewish immigrants until they were able to settle down. No fees were charged those unable to pay. Jewish travelers were permitted to remain three days at community expense. See Rochester *Post-Express*, March 10, 1903.
62. Certificate of Incorporation, County Clerk, Monroe County, February 7, 1903 and April 25, 1903. Rochester *Post-Express*, March 10, 1903. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, April 16, 1903.
63. Certificate of Incorporation, 1925, County Clerk, Monroe County. In addition, the certificate of incorporation includes as an object of the congregation "to establish and maintain a Jewish Community Center." It is interesting to note that three women are listed here as trustees! This is most unusual for an Orthodox congregation. The women were

Mrs. Nathan Natapow, Mrs. Hyman Kolko, and Mrs. Sarah Lepides. *Jewish Ledger*, September 27, 1924, p. 14.

64. A survey of Jewish education in Rochester made in May, 1922, produced the following facts: "It is estimated that there are approximately 1,240 children receiving Hebrew and religious instruction in Rochester. They are divided as follows:

Rochester Hebrew School (Talmud Torah)	400
Temple Beth El	270
Temple Berith Kodesh	175
Beth Israel Congregation	100
Vaad Hakolel Congregation	45
Council of Jewish Women	50
Private instruction (estimated)	200
	<hr/>
	1,240

The number of Jewish children 5 to 14 years of age approximates 2,500. Therefore, over 1,200 children 5 to 14 years of age appear not to receive religious or Hebrew instruction." Study of the Social and Recreational Facilities and Needs Relating to the Jewish Community of Rochester, New York, 1922.

There were several small, private schoolhouses conducted by Hebrew teachers. The largest of these was the one operated by Abraham Solomon on Thomas Street.

65. Critics of the congregational Hebrew School blame it for the overall qualitative and quantitative decline of Jewish education. The editor of *The Objectives and Standards for the Congregational School, 1948*, indicates the situation (page 3):

"The past two decades have witnessed a marked growth in the number of schools under congregational auspices, and in the number of pupils enrolled in these schools. Today the congregational school admittedly occupies a prominent and permanent place in the field of Jewish education. The development has imposed a responsibility upon the congregation, a responsibility which in too many instances they were not prepared to meet. Failing to formulate their own curriculum in terms of their particular needs and attitudes, they usually took over the curriculum of the Talmud Torah without providing as adequately for its implementation. Congregational schools were usually small, independent units. Budgets were stringently limited. Educational standards were lowered as reflected in an over-emphasis on the Sunday School and in fewer hours of instruction in the week-day sessions; in poorly trained teachers, and in inadequate supervision and facilities."

Nevertheless, the writer goes on to say "the faults found in many of the schools are not inherent in the congregational school system."

66. This is an excerpt from a letter written by Mrs. Weilerstein to the author, giving her impression of some important events in Jewish life when she resided in Rochester. The letter is dated December 23, 1951.

67. That year, however, according to Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 29, 1916, the Turkish Jews cooperated with the Associated Hebrew Charities.

68. Certificate of Incorporation, December 20, 1916.

69. The Sephardim still use their own section of the Vaad Hakolel cemetery on Stone Road. Their first burial took place in 1914. In 1952, there were about 65 people buried in the Sephardic plot. The graves are marked by tombstones placed horizontally over the earth and encased by cemented bricks.

70. The basic data for this account of the Rochester Sephardic community was graciously supplied the author by Mr. Leon Albahari, who lived through most of the events described.

NOTES TO 16: REFORM RELIGIOUS LIFE

1. Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, November 26, 1913. On that day Mr. Max Lowenthal wrote Dr. Landsberg that the Board of Directors had accepted his resignation and designated him Rabbi Emeritus at a salary of \$2,000 a year for the rest of his life. The resignation, however, was not to take effect until March 1, 1915.

2. *Ibid.*, February 5, 1905.

3. Rabbi Nathan Blechman indicates this fact in a letter to the author. See also Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, May 5, 1907.

4. Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, March 8, 1908. "It was moved and carried that a committee be appointed to confer with Rabbi Levy, notifying him that at the expiration of his contract he will not be re-engaged." Rabbi Blechman also indicated in his letter that from the start Rabbi Levy was unpopular with some members of his congregation because of his interest in the affairs of the Orthodox community.

5. *Ibid.*, November 1 and 5, 1908.

6. *Ibid.*, December 23, 1909.

7. *Ibid.*, Temple B'rith Kodesh, April 2, 1911.

8. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 37.

9. *Jewish Tidings*, November 28, 1890.

10. Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, January 29, 1901.

11. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1903; November 6, 1904.
12. *Ibid.*, January 3, 1909; November 5, 1911; November 27, 1911.
13. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1911.
14. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1912.
15. *Ibid.*, October 23, 1913.
16. *Ibid.*, September 1, October 6, and November 3, 1907.
17. *Ibid.*, Temple B'rith Kodesh, July 7, 1907.
18. *Ibid.*, March 3, 1901. A letter received from the elders of the church hailing this act was sent to the editor of *The American Israelite*.
19. *Ibid.*, March 24, 1907.
20. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1908.
21. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1909.
22. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1909.
23. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1909. The annual meeting of the congregation that year took place on Friday evening at the Universalist Church. *Rochester Herald*, October 4, 1910.
24. From a Rochester newspaper clipping inserted into Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, December 13, 1920.
25. Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, August 2, 1910.
26. On that day, the Berith Kodesh congregation was formally inducted into membership. See Certificate of affiliation in the Temple, dated July 11, 1875 [Tamuz 8, 5635].
27. Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, December 3, 1911.
28. *Ibid.*, January 5, 1914.
29. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1914.
30. *Ibid.*, November 7 and March 3, 1918.
31. *In Memoriam*, Horace J. Wolf, 1885-1927, p. 14.

NOTES TO 17: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

1. From the original printed circular in the possession of the author.
2. *Rochester Herald*, February 12, 1898.
3. *Ibid.*, August 23, November 29, 1907.
4. Dedication Program, Jewish Young Men's and Women's Association, Rochester, New York. September 8, 1936. Mrs. Abraham Lipsky was its first president. Esther Weiss served as president from 1908 to 1910 and again from 1915 to 1918. She was an untiring leader who was assisted by such other able presidents as Mrs. I. M. Shapero (1911); Mrs. Harris Joffe (1912-1914); Mrs. Meyer Jacobstein (1919); Mrs. Maxwell Posner (1920-1923); and Mrs. Saul LaVine (1924). Among the men,

Haskell H. Marks became one of the inspiring leaders, and these colleagues served as president: Philip Present (1908-1916); Benjamin Goldstein (1917-1918); Norman Rosenberg (1919-1920); and Harry Klonick (1921).

5. Dedication Program, Jewish Young Men's and Women's Association, Rochester, New York. September 8, 1936.

6. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 12, 18, and 26, 1914.

7. "Jewish Young Men's Association," in Study of the Social and Recreational Facilities and Needs Relating to the Jewish Community of Rochester, New York (May, 1922).

8. *Jewish Ledger*, July 3, 1925. "Jewish Organizations" in Study of the Social and Recreational Facilities. . .

9. For an interesting account of the war work of the Rochester Jewish community see Louis Kraft, "World War Service of the Jewish Welfare Board, Rochester Branch," *World War Service Record of Rochester and Monroe County*, III, 171-81.

10. Kraft, "World War Service of the Jewish Welfare Board, Rochester Branch," pp. 175-80.

11. The data on the Sunday Schools of the Rochester Section of the National Council of Jewish Women is taken from a report delivered at the November 7, 1950, meeting of that group. Mrs. Henry G. Samuelsohn, who served as chairman of the Council's Religious School Committee, rendered the report. See also *Bulletin*, Rochester Section, Council of Jewish Women, April, 1926.

12. Blake McKelvey, "Historic Origins of Rochester's Social Welfare Agencies," *Rochester History*, IX (April, 1947), 32-33. At a mass meeting held at No. 9 School it was announced by Isaac Adler, School Commissioner, that as of March 1, 1911, the social center work would end, "because of lack of funds." The announcement was met with "shame" and "not a few hisses." "Cutting down the appropriation," Adler said, was simply "a desire to cut down the tax levy." *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, February 18, 1911.

13. See "Americanization," in Study of the Social and Recreational Facilities and Needs Relating to the Jewish Community of Rochester, New York (May, 1922).

14. Minute Book, Irondequoit Country Club, June 13 and 17, 1917.

15. *Ibid.*, October 1 and 27, 1916.

16. *Ibid.*, Irondequoit Country Club, June 17, 1917.

17. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1918.

18. *Ibid.*, Irondequoit Country Club, May 31, 1920.

19. The data on Kappa Nu was supplied by Garson Meyer, its na-

tional president from 1924 to 1948. In 1948 he was made honorary president for life.

20. Official Canvass and Statement of the Board of County Canvassers of the County of Monroe, 1901, p. 55.

21. *Ibid.*, 1903, p. 52.

22. *Ibid.*, 1905, p. 41.

23. Official Canvass and Statement of the Board of County Canvassers of the County of Monroe, 1907, p. 54. Variant spellings: Sawll Carson, Sawl Carson.

24. *Ibid.*, 1909, p. 52; 1911, p. 52; 1913, p. 59; 1915, p. 68.

25. *Ibid.*, 1917, p. 155.

26. *Ibid.*, 1919, p. 135; 1921, p. 130; 1923, p. 116.

27. *Ibid.*, 1909, p. 52. Wile, *The Jews of Rochester*, p. 14.

28. Wile, *Jews of Rochester*, p. 14.

29. Official Canvass and Statement of the Board of County Canvassers of the County of Monroe, 1914, p. 60; 1916, p. 154; 1918, p. 98; 1920, p. 163; 1922, p. 60; 1924, p. 128.

30. *Biographical Directory of the American Congress* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 1365.

31. In a letter to the author, dated March 31, 1953, Dr. Jacobstein indicates an interesting sequence of events. Although this letter transcends the chronological limits of this study it is worth noting. Dr. Jacobstein writes:

"In the depths of the depression (1932) I conceived the plan which was later developed into the "National Industrial Recovery Act," popularly known as N.R.A. After Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President in 1932, I called on him at his New York City residence before the inauguration. I laid my legislative program before him and he encouraged me to go forward with it and present a memo embodying the N.R.A. concept.

"This I did, in cooperation with Dr. Harold Moulton, President of the Brookings Institution. The joint product was in President Roosevelt's hands by March 6, 1933, two days after his inauguration. I have a letter from him acknowledging receipt of the N.R.A. memorandum.

"The N.R.A. proposal was taken over by Senator Robert Wagner, who later became author of the Act.

"Before President Roosevelt presented the proposal he requested me to 'sell' the idea to important members of the Cabinet. This I did. I called personally on Madame Perkins, Secretary of Labor; Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture; James Farley, Postmaster General; and the then Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Roper. . . ."

NOTES TO 18: PHILANTHROPY AND WELFARE

1. As early as 1890 the *Jewish Tidings* reported the organization of the "Jewish Alliance of Rochester," a relief organization founded by local East European Jews at the Leopold Street Synagogue. The editor headlined this fact with glee! "Something Done At Last! The Russian Jews Help Themselves." *Jewish Tidings*, October 17, 1890.
2. *Rochester Herald*, January 5, 1907.
3. *Rochester Post-Express*, March 1, 1898. *Rochester Herald*, February 12, 1898.
4. *Rochester Herald*, May 16, 18, 23, 29, 1903.
5. *Rochester Post-Express*, June 28, 1906.
6. Certificate of Incorporation, May 22, 1908.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Rochester Herald*, May 24, 1908.
9. *Rochester Post-Express*, December 8 and 9, 1908. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, December 19, 1911. Mr. Simon Stein, a leading figure in the German Jewish community, regularly visited these annual affairs, together with several of his friends, and always made what was considered a valuable contribution of funds.
10. *Rochester Post-Express*, December 8, 1908. *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, December 19, 1911.
11. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, December 29, 1916.
12. *Rochester Post-Express*, July 12, 1913. Also plaque at 144 Baden Street.
13. From a letterhead of the Associated Hebrew Charities of 1920, in the possession of the writer.
14. In 1921, the Associated Hebrew Charities expended \$37,153.36. See "Jewish Organization" in Study of the Social and Recreational Facilities and Needs Relating to the Jewish Community of Rochester (New York, 1922).
15. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, December 12, 1914.
16. *Ibid.*, January 20, 27, December 18, 1916.
17. *Ibid.*, November 26, 1916.
18. *Ibid.*, January 16 and March 11, 1917.
19. *Ibid.*, December 19, 23, 27, and 28, 1917.
20. Certificate of Incorporation, Hebrew Ladies' Bikur Cholim Society of Rochester, Inc., 1915.
21. See an unpublished manuscript: William Greenberg, A Study of Changes in Adoption Procedures in the Rochester Jewish Agency, 1947. A number of the impressions and facts for the material above on the

merger were supplied the author by Mr. Joseph Silverstein, himself an officer for many years of the Associated Hebrew Charities.

22. Certificate of Incorporation, June 7, 1904, County Clerk, Monroe County, New York. *Jewish Ledger*, October 11, 1924.

23. *Jewish Ledger*, October 11, 1924.

24. Certificate of Incorporation, Hebrew Ladies Ose Chesed Society of Rochester, New York, 1915, County Clerk, Monroe County, New York. The purpose is listed as "to grant assistance to the needy of the Jewish faith in the City of Rochester, to take and receive by gift, purchase or otherwise acquire, and to hold, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of personal property and the income therefrom, in order the better to carry out the purpose of this corporation."

25. In the Rochester Jewish Community of 1950 this pattern was still evident. The Mother's Club of the Jewish Children's home was reconstituted after the Home went out of existence. It was then called the Mother's Club for Israel, and members were asked to serve the orphan and needy children of the Jews in Israel. In addition, none of the dozen Orthodox synagogues in the old Jewish section—the "Joseph Avenue Section"—were closed or merged, despite the fact that most of them hardly had the quorum of ten worshipers required for either the daily or the Sabbath services.

26. Brochure, Jewish Children's Home, Rochester, 1921.

27. *Home Review*, Jewish Children's Home, 1937. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, August 10, 1916.

28. From the Programme of the opening of the Jewish Sheltering Home on Sunday, September 13, 1914. Other officers were Mrs. Toby Goldman, second vice-president; Frank Sherman, treasurer; Lester Paley, recording secretary; Miss Rachel Kirznbau, financial secretary.

29. Utica *Saturday Globe*, September 19, 1914.

30. *Home Review*, Jewish Children's Home, 1937.

31. Brochure, Jewish Children's Home, 1921. Ida Klein Richardson, A Study in Institutional and Foster Home Care for Dependent Children, M.A. thesis, Univ. of Rochester, 1938, p. 22.

32. Richardson, A Study in Institutional and Foster Home Care, p. 22.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

34. Rochester *Union and Advertiser*, November 2, 1910.

35. Among these energetic leaders were Mrs. Brina Applebaum, Mrs. Gertrude Cohen, Mrs. Hannah Cohen, Mrs. Tobie Goldman, Mrs. Hannah Goldstein, Mrs. Abe Goldstein, and Mrs. Sarah G. Meyer.

36. The data here is taken from a statement dated December 11, 1949,

by Garson Meyer, president of the Home. This statement was placed in the cornerstone of the Home's new structure and addressed to the "President of the Jewish Home for the Aged, Inc., in the year 2049, Rochester, New York."

37. *Jewish Ledger*, October 11, 1924.

38. "The Story of the Common Good," *The Common Good*, VII (August, 1914), 194-99.

39. This information was supplied the author by Rabbi Levi Olan.

40. *Baden Street Settlement, 1901-1926*. Most of the facts relating to the Settlement described in this section are taken from this excellent report. See also *Year Book of the Social Settlement of Rochester, 1901-1902*.

41. *Baden Street Settlement, Annual Report, 1925*.

42. "Distribution of Jewish Population," Study of the Social and Recreational Facilities and Needs Relating to the Jewish Community of Rochester, New York, 1922.

The authors of the survey indicate: "The best index of the distribution of the Jewish population available is the attendance of pupils of the Jewish faith in the public schools. The large registration of Jewish pupils is in the following public schools:

School	Location	Jewish Pupils	Percent of Total
No. 9	Joseph Avenue	838	61
No. 26	Bernard Street	552	41
No. 20	Oakman Street	407	38
No. 10	Chatham Street	200	25
No. 23	Barrington Street	127	14
No. 18	North Street	250	13

This, of course, is only an estimate, based upon a check of absence on the Day of Atonement. It does, however, give us a general indication of the neighborhoods which were slowly being populated by Jews. In time some of these newer sections were to become new centers of Jewish population in the city.

43. I. K. Richardson, *A Study in Institutional and Foster Home Care*, pp. 20-22.

44. United Jewish Charities, Report, September, 1901, in a miscellaneous collection of the papers of Dr. Max Landsberg, local History Division, Rochester Public Library. "In the year ending August 31, 1901, 84 resident cases involving 386 individuals . . . \$2,905.37 drawn from Benevolent Society and only \$2,059.50 were provided by subscription." Compare this with the sum of \$18,000 expended in 1922, as reported in *Study of Social and Recreational Facilities . . . , Rochester, New York, 1922*.

NOTES TO 19: RISE AND GROWTH OF ZIONISM

1. This is a direct quotation from Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein of Temple B'rith Kodesh, Rochester, New York, in a discussion with the author.

2. Dr. Landsberg had taken exception to the remarks of the *Post-Express* columnist who espoused the ideas of Zionism which were printed in a Rochester Jewish periodical *The Shofar*. *The Shofar* had claimed that a basic rift existed between Reform and Orthodox Jews and recommended that only the "star" of Zionism would give "a common objective to all Jews." Dr. Landsberg rejoined, saying that Zionism plays into the hands of the anti-Semite. See Rochester *Post-Express*, September 27, 30; October 4, 1899.

3. Rochester *Post-Express*, March 20, 21, 1903.

4. In fact, the Rochester *Post-Express*, on March 21, 1903, carries a story in which Dr. Landsberg disclaims a press report of the day before in which he is quoted as saying that "assimilation was the only solution of the problem of the Jews." The fact that the newspaper had quoted this, even though it may have been a misquotation, leads us to assume that the attributing of such a viewpoint to Landsberg must have been prevalent in the community.

5. Resolution found in Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, April 7, 1907.

6. Minute Book, Temple B'rith Kodesh, May 5, 1907. See also Naomi Wiener Cohen's "The Reaction of Reform Judaism in America to Political Zionism (1897-1922)," American Jewish Historical Society, *Publications*, Number XL (June, 1951), 361-94. Mrs. Cohen points out that in 1903 with Kohler's ascendancy to the presidency of the Hebrew Union College, inner dissension was felt on the Zionist question. Kohler had said that American Judaism "stands for American thought and American spirit and not for Zionist neo-Hebraism or the language of the Jewish ghetto." (p. 372). A series of incidents followed, involving certain faculty members who were sympathetic to Zionism. It was in 1907 that the "greatest furor" was aroused. Professors Henry Malter, Max L. Margolis, and Max Schloessinger, all Zionists, resigned from their positions. Apparently, word of the controversy had been brought to the attention of the trustees of Temple B'rith Kodesh by Dr. Landsberg. The resolution of the Rochester congregation gave that group the opportunity to make known its official opposition to Zionism.

7. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 16 and 19, 1905.

8. Rochester *Post-Express*, June 30, 1905.

9. *Ibid.*, November 13, December 14, 1905.

10. Rochester *Herald*, July 28, 1906.
11. Rochester *Post-Express*, November 24, 1906.
12. *Ibid.*, March 5, 1908.
13. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, March 6, 1916.
14. Rochester *Post-Express*, June 26, 1914.
15. *Ibid.*, June 27, 1914.
16. *Ibid.*, Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, June 29, 1914.
17. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, June 30, 1914.
18. Rochester *Post-Express*, June 30, 1914. See also Lotta Levensohn, "Henrietta Szold, 1860-1945," *American Jewish Year Book*, XLVII (1945-1946), 58-59. Miss Levensohn claims that "Hadassah" was the original name given at the New York city founding meeting on February 24, 1912. However, according to Rose Zeitlin, the 1914 convention in Rochester was the first national meeting of the eight chapters of the Daughters of Zion. It was at this convention, at the request of Dr. Judah Magnes, that the name "Hadassah" was adopted. See Rose Zeitlin, *Henrietta Szold: Record of a Life*, pp. 43-44.
19. Rochester *Post-Express*, June 29, 1914.
20. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, June 29, 1914.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, June 29, 1914. Rochester *Post-Express*, June 30, 1914.
23. Rochester *Post-Express*, June 30, 1914.
24. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 24, 1916.
25. *Jewish Ledger*, November 8, 1924.
26. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, August 6, 1916; January 1, 1917.
27. *Ibid.*, February 13, 1923. A 1924 Brochure of the Foundation Fund mentions Dr. Weizmann's visit.
28. *Iddish Nazionale Arbeter Farband, 1910-1946* (The Jewish National Worker's Alliance), p. 5.
29. The first national convention of the Farband was held in Albany in 1912. It was incorporated in 1913.
30. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 13, 1914.
31. *Ibid.*, December 13, 1914.
32. *Ibid.*, December 26, 27, and 28, 1914.
33. Gershon Avrunin and Baruch Zuckerman were among the first members of the Rochester Poale Zion. Later they moved away from Rochester.
34. Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, December 27 and 28, 1914.
35. *Ibid.*, January 2, 1916. During its first year membership increased from five to fifty.

36. Much of the foregoing account of the Rochester Poale Zion was graciously given the author by Benjamin Auerbach, Isadore Greenhouse, and Gamliel Lipsky, who lived through the events described.

37. Until 1927, when there was organized the Ladies Mizrachi, the women met together with the men. At that time, a women's chapter was organized in Rochester, with Mrs. Meyer Amdursky as president.

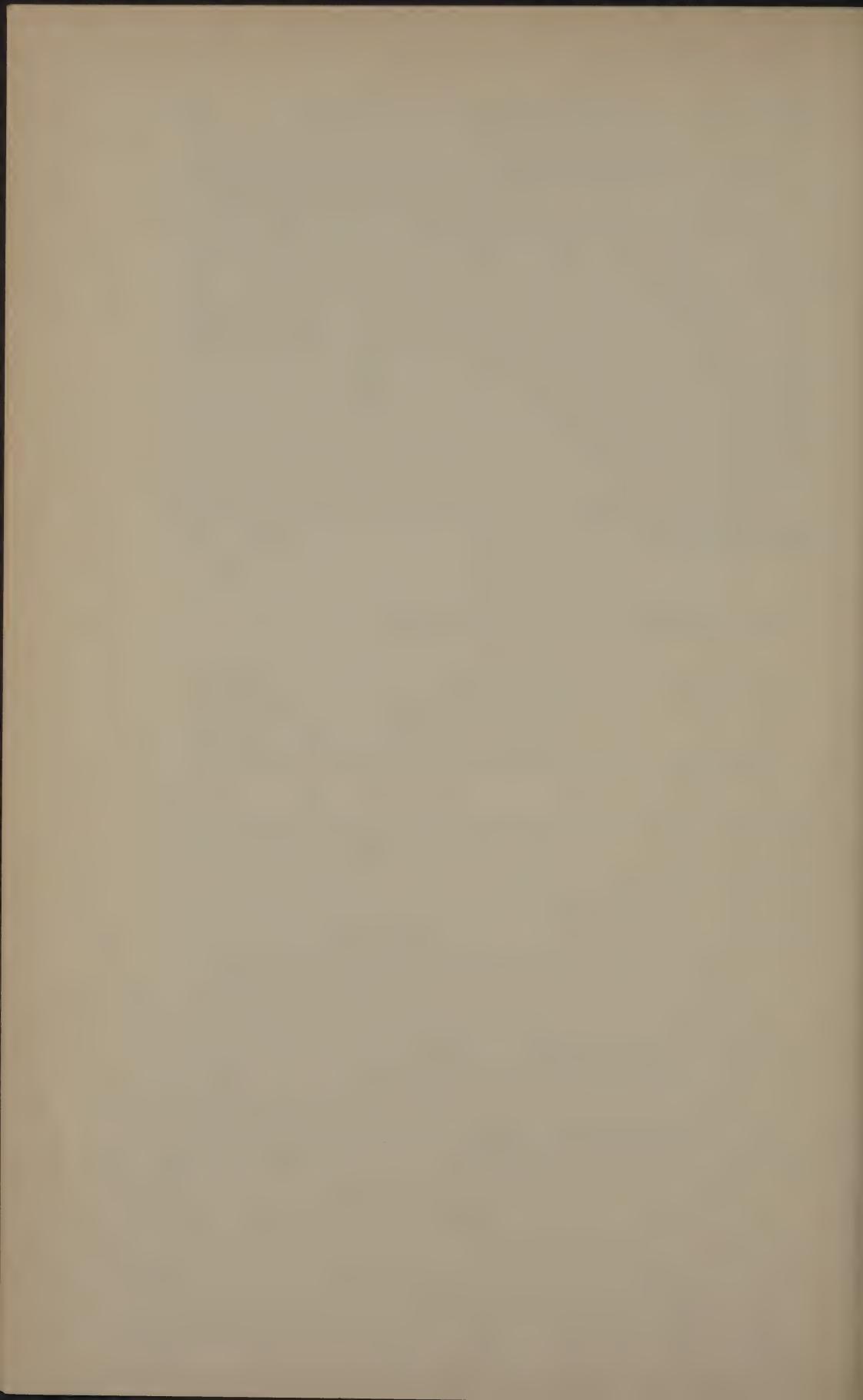
38. In 1938 Jacob Hollander became president and helped reinvigorate this organization. The material for this account of Mizrachi in Rochester has been furnished the author by Mr. Hollander.

39. Rochester *Post-Express*, June 24, 1914. Nathan Straus, unable to attend the Zionist convention in Rochester in 1914, sent a letter in which he noted that "formerly Jews went to Palestine to die but now they go with the hope of freedom to live."

40. Rochester *Post-Express*, September 27, 30; October 4, 1899. This quotes *The Shofar*, with Lipsky's statement and a sharp rejoinder from Dr. Max Landsberg.

NOTE TO 20: TOWARD MATURITY

1. Israel Friedlaender, *Past and Present*, pp. 277-278.



APPENDIX

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION, IN ENGLISH
FROM THE TRUSTEES OF CONGREGATION B'RITH KODESH
TO DR. FERDINAND SARNER, JULY 22, 1860

Office of the Trustees of the Congregation B'rith Kodesh
Rochester, New York, July 22

At a regular meeting of the Board, it being announced that the Reverend Dr. Ferdinand Sarner, our beloved Rabbi intended to resign his situation; the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved: that we cannot find words to express our full or entire satisfaction with the service rendered by the Rev. Dr. Sarner while among us as our spiritual leader and adviser.

Resolved: that his lectures were full of useful information as well as also inspiring every hearer with a profound and sincere love and admiration for our holy faith.

Resolved: that we cheerfully recommend the Rev. Dr. Sarner to every Congregation in this country as an excellent scholar and eloquent lecturer and a good truly religious man for whom we shall ever bear the kindest feelings.

For the Board of Trustees.

TEXT OF DOCUMENT FROM PRUSSIAN MINISTER
APRIL 7, 1863

Prussian Ambassador's Office
Washington, D.C., April 7, 1863

The undersigned Legation to His Majesty the King of Prussia testifies
that the Bearer, Rev. Dr. Ferdinand Sarner, has presented the Original
Documents of his Theological studies at the Royal University of Berlin,
showing that he is a regularly ordained Minister and was graduated—
—Doctor of Divinity—

(Signed) Jno. Genols
Minister from Prussia

[Seal]

*Mission De Prusse Pres
Les États Unis*

Note: This document may very well be a forgery. In the first place there
was no Ambassador from Prussia to United States in 1863, rather a
Minister—as the document itself indicates by the signature. Moreover,
the authorities at the University of Berlin (Humboldt-Universität zu
Berlin, Theologische Fakultät) have informed the author that the de-
gree of Doctor of Divinity was never awarded at that time—only the
degree of Doctor of Theology.

GLOSSARY

Bar Mitzvah: Literally, the son of the commandment. A Jewish boy who has reached the age of thirteen.

Beth Hamidrash: Literally, house of study. Study was one of the three-fold functions of the synagogue; the other two were prayer and assembly.

B'rith: Literally, covenant. Also refers to the rite of circumcision, whereby the Jewish male child, on the eighth day after birth, was ushered into the Covenant of Abraham.

Hachnosas Orchim (or **Hakhnosat Orhim**): Literally, hospitality to guests. Also the name given to the Jewish communal institution that served the physical needs of Jewish transients.

Haftarah: The portion from the Prophets read after the weekly reading from the Pentateuch.

Hanukkah: Literally, dedication. The Feast of Lights, celebrating the rededication of the Temple by the Maccabees.

Hazzan: The cantor whose function it is to chant the Hebrew liturgy at the synagogue service.

Hevra Kadisha: Literally, holy association. A society whose members perform the sacred rites associated with burying the Jewish dead.

Kaddish: Literally, sanctification. The doxology recited especially in memory of the departed.

Kashruth: The system of dietary laws practiced by observant Jews.

Kiddush: Literally, sanctification. The benediction chanted over the cup of wine on Sabbath and festivals, declaring the sanctification of these holy days.

Kosher: Food that is ritually acceptable in accordance with Jewish religious practice.

Minyan: Literally, number. A minyan or quorum of ten males above the age of thirteen is required for public Jewish worship. The plural, *minyanim*, is used in the sense of small congregations of worshipers.

Mikvah: A ritual bath maintained by observant Jews for purification purposes.

Mohel: One who performs the rite of circumcision. A mohel must be qualified by both piety and experience.

Purim: Literally, lots. The festival whose history is recorded in the Book of Esther.

Rav: Literally, master or teacher. Refers to the spiritual leader or rabbi.

Shavuot: Literally, weeks. The Feast of Pentecost or Feast of Weeks. Occurs seven weeks after the second day of Passover.

Shohet: One who slaughters animals or fowl according to Jewish ritual. Must be an observant Jew and must be certified by a rabbi as proficient in the knowledge of laws pertaining to slaughter.

Shul: A synagogue.

Sukkot: The Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths.

Tachrichim: White linen burial shroud.

Talmud Torah: An elementary school for Jewish religious education.

Tishah B'Av: The ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av. The anniversary of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. A day of mourning.

Torah: In a limited sense the Five Books of Moses. More broadly, Torah refers to all of Jewish learning and culture, both biblical and rabbinic.

Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, observed by prayer and fasting.

Yom Tov: Literally, a good day. Refers to a Jewish holiday.

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Rochester Union and Advertiser: see *Rochester Times-Union*.

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Leon Albahari, an active member of the Sephardic Jewish community of Rochester, supplied information regarding his group.

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Rabbi Charles Bender, of Montreal, Canada, and one time Cantor of Temple Beth El, in Rochester, supplied background material for the history of Temple Beth El's early years.

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Rabbi Nathan Blechman, who was the first English-speaking rabbi at Beth Israel Congregation, offered a number of important facts relating to his ministry in Rochester.

Isaac M. Brickner, Rochester attorney, supplied first-hand information regarding the social and cultural life of the German Jews in Rochester in the late nineteenth century.

Rabbi Paul Chertoff, onetime rabbi of Beth Israel Congregation, supplied personal views concerning the Rochester Jewish community, the Beth Israel Congregation and the leadership of the then newly-organized Temple Beth El.

Abraham Davidson, a leader of the Orthodox community in the 1890s, supplied information regarding the religious and philanthropic life of his group during that period.

Joseph Goldstein, a local Jewish leader, was a member of the Young Men's Zion Society, as well as a leader of the earliest Young Judea groups in Rochester. He supplied information concerning the activities of these groups.

Isadore Greenhouse, one of the founders of the Rochester Poale Zion, supplied information regarding the origin of that organization.

Jacob S. Hollander, a leader of the Orthodox community, and formerly Superintendent of the Jewish Children's Home, supplied information regarding these groups, as well as important details relating to the activities of the Rochester Mizrachi.

Jesse Horwitz, president of the National Clothing Company, supplied information regarding the development of his company.

Dr. Meyer Jacobstein, of Washington, D.C., and formerly a member

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Nelson Kirschenbaum, a younger leader of the Rochester Poale Zion, supplied information which described the impact of Labor Zionism upon some of the local Jewish youth.

Gamliel Lipsky, a leader of the Rochester Poale Zion, offered information about his group.

Louis Lipsky, well-known American Zionist leader, lived in Rochester as a youth. He supplied information and impressions of the Jewish community he knew as a teen-ager.

Arthur M. Lowenthal, President of the Jewish Community Council of Rochester, gave his impressions of the social and cultural life of the German-Jewish community in the early years of the twentieth century.

Garson Meyer, formerly president of the Jewish Home for the Aged, discussed the growth and development of that institution. In addition, as a leading figure in the Kappa Nu fraternity, he was helpful in describing the circumstances surrounding the organization of that group.

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Harris Nusbaum, a leader of the Orthodox community, discussed the mores of his group during the 1890s. As an active leader in both organizations, he supplied important information concerning the establishment of the Vaad Hakashruth and the Beth Hatevilah (Ritual Bath).

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Miss Stella Schifrin, active in Jewish welfare work, supplied data relating to the activities of the United Jewish Charities, Dr. Max Lansberg, and of her father, Solomon Schifrin.

Miss Miriam Seligman, who was among the first Jewish girls enrolled at the University of Rochester, supplied information regarding German Jewish life and customs in the early part of the twentieth century. As the daughter of Henry M. Seligman, she was able to offer information, which she had heard in her father's home, about the life of the first settlers.

Joseph Silverstein, a prominent Rochester Jewish leader, supplied

first-hand information regarding the work of the Associated Hebrew Charities, Rochester Zionist societies, the Jewish free loan societies, and the Jewish Home for the Aged.

Samuel Sturman, first president of the Jewish Welfare Council, offered information regarding the life of the East European Jewish community in the late nineteenth century.

Sadie Rose Weilerstein, Rochester-born Jewish author, supplied information regarding the coming of the Sephardic Jews, the growth of the Rochester Hadassah Chapter, and the social life of the East European Jews of Rochester in the early part of the twentieth century.

INDEX

Academy of Music, 109
Achi Sholom Congregation, 55
Adams, Hersh, 281 *n.9*
Adams, Myron, 103
Adas Jeshurun, 29-30
Adler, Abram, 126, 249 *n.5*
Adler, Cyrus, 100
Adler, Elmer, 205, 221
Adler, Felix, 130, 273 *n.36*
Adler, Isaac, 200, 208
Adler, Jacob, 206
Adler, Levi, 103
Adler, Mortimer, 151, 194
Adler, Simon L., 208
Adler Brothers and Company, 121
Agudas Achim Nusach Ari Congregation,
 61
Ahavas Achim Anshe Radishkowitch
 Congregation, 167, 168
Ahavas Achim Congregation, 54, 55
Ahavas Achim Anschei Estreich Congre-
 gation, 180
Ahavas Achim Anshe Kipel Volin Con-
 gregation, 167
Aiole, Mrs. Sol (*nee* Rachel Kirznaum),
 178, 291 n.28
Aiole, Solomon, 198
Aitz Raanon Congregation, 87-88, 96-98
Albahari, David, 187
Albahari, Leon, 286 *n.70*
Albertson, C. C., 192
Albion, N.Y., 43
Aleph Eien Club, 217
Alexander Street, 106
Algazi, Isaac, 187
Alliance Israelite Universelle, 47
Altman, Bertha, 246 *n.14*
Altman, Jacob, 5, 249 *n.5*
Altman, Joseph, 5, 21, 249, *n.5*
Amalgamated Clothing Workers of
 America, 127, 155-56
Amdoursky, Meyer, 56
Amdoursky, Mrs. Meyer, 216
American, Sadie, 111
American Federation of Labor, 115, 126-
 27
American Jewish Community, 5; attitude
 of the German-American Jews toward
 the immigration of the East European
 Jews, 66, 68; conflict of Orthodox and
 Reform movement in, 87; influence of
 American-born Jews on, 207
American Jewish Relief Committee, 212
American Protective Association, 261
 n.20
Anderson, Martin, 117, 128, 251 *n.29*
Andrews Street, 27, 81, 91
Anikster, Lesser, 56
Ansche Poland Congregation, 167
Anthony, Susan B., 75
Anti-Semitic feelings, Jewish attitude
 toward, 118-19
Appelbaum, Samuel, 75
Applebaum, Mrs. Brina, 291 *n.35*
Applebaum, Sol. J., 194
Ararat, a City of Refuge for the Jews, 3,
 4
Arbeiter Ring, *see* Workmen's Circle
Arbeiter Ring Shule, 155
Architects, Jews as, 129
Ari, 259 *n.38*
Arion Hall, 78
Arnold Park, 105
Ashkenasi, Aaron Selig, 250 *n.21*
Associated Hebrew Charities, 211-14, 224-
 25
Associated Merchandising Corporation,
 160

Atwater Street, 26, 52, 97
 Auerbach, Benjamin, 295 *n.36*
 Augustine Hall, 234
 Avrunin, Gershon, 232, 234, 294 *n.33*

Baden Street: Judean Club on, 75; Associated Hebrew Charities on, 185, 211; B'nai Zion Hebrew Library on, 199; Social Settlement house on, 202, 220
 Baden Street Settlement, 202, 220-23
 Baker, Elizabeth, Mrs. Myer Greentree, 5
 Baker Theater, 206
 Balfour Declaration, 235
 Baptist Church, 26, 192
 Bardin, Kalman, 53, 56
 Bar Mitzvah: of first boy born in Rochester, 36; ceremony dropped by Dr. Landsberg, 91, 191; at Leopold Street *Shul*, 172
 Barnard, Mr., 26, 43
 Baron, Salo W., *Foreword*, vii
 Baum, I. A., 272 *n.25*
 Beir, Asher, 6, 103
 Beir, Joseph, 13, 18, 130-31
 Beir, Martin, 263 *n.26*, 274 *n.2*
 Bender, Charles, 177, 283 *n.44*
 Bene Sholom Congregation, 53
 Berith Kodesh (or B'rith Kodesh) Congregation: establishment of, 20-22, 24; acquired building, 25-26; early attempts at reform, 26-42; later reforms, 85-104, 189; new synagogue, 91; cost of membership, 92; semicentennial jubilee celebration, 103-104; interfaith meetings, 114-16; name changed to B'rith Kodesh, 189, 249 *n.1*; Sunday services at, 190-91; Great Fire consumed, 191-92; cooperation with other Jewish groups in World War I, 200
 Berith Oulom (later, Etz Chayim Congregation), 97-98
 Berith Sholem Society, 53
 Berlove, Mrs. Lester M., 269 *n.38*
 Bernhardt, Joshua, 207
 Bernis, William J., 216
 Bernstein, Philip S., 172, 196, 231, 282 *n.21*
 Beth Din (rabbinical court), 182
 Beth El Congregation, 175-80, 200
 Beth Hakneses Hachodesh Congregation, 56, 79; constitutional rules of, 58; Hebrew school in, 74
 Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Congregation, 168, 181
 Beth Hatevilah (community Mikvah), 167
 Beth Israel Congregation, 53; new building of, 54; David Ginsberg as rabbi of, 61, 164; Nathan Blechman as rabbi of, 169-71; cooperation in World War I, 200
 Beth Jehudah Center, 180, 185, 201
 Bieber, Mrs. Jack, 178
 Big Brothers and Sisters Club, 217
 Bigelow, Fannie R., 113, 220
 Bikur Cholim (personal nursing service), 214
 Bikur Cholim Society, 218
 Bing, S., 28
 Blackall, Sarah, 71
 Blau, Joel, 177-78
 Blechman, Nathan, 169-71, 228
 Blind, Rochester Association for the, 195
 Blumberg's Hall, 75, 78
 B'nai Aviezer Congregation, 55, 56
 B'nai B'rith Congregation, 21, 250 *n.9*
 B'nai B'rith Zerubabel Lodge, 44-45, 81; as a German-Jewish fraternal order, 139-40; cooperation in World War I, 200; when organized, 276, *n.32*
 B'nai David Congregation, 55, 164; united with Chevra Chayteem Congregation, 168, 180; *see also* Beth Hamedrash Hagodol
 B'nai Israel Congregation, 55
 B'nai Judah Congregation, 180
 Boardinghouse, *see* Hachnosas Orchim
 Board of Delegates of American Israelites, 46
 Bowery Place, (now Cumberland Street), 21
 Boys' Evening Home, 71, 74, 138
 Breiman, Ida, 154
 Brettenstool and Son, 10
 Brickner, Isaac, 249 *n.3*
 Brickner, Max: active in German cultural activities of Rochester, 110; president of Chamber of Commerce, 122, 128; member of Clothiers' Exchange, 126
 Brickner, Richard, 222
 Brickner, Samuel M., 99, 129
 Bridge Street, 6
 Britenstool (or Brettenstool), Hirsh (or Hirsch), 5, 14, 86
 B'rith Abraham Lodge, 81, 200
 B'rith Kodesh, *see* Berith Kodesh Congregation
 Britton Road, 181
 Brockport, N.Y., 43

Brown, William T., 115-16
Burial ground, 20-21; of Polish Jews, 52; near Greece, N.Y., 168; of Orthodox community, 181-82; for Jewish poor, 276 *n.35*

Butchers, 56; relations with ritual slaughterers, 61, 67, 165; Vaad Hakashruth and, 166-67, 182-83

Calderon, Jacob, 187

Cantors, 21, 31, 78

Caplan, Isaac, 164

Carson, Israel, 232

Carson, Joseph, 208

Carson, Saul: supervisor of Seventh Ward, 208; on Committee for Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, 212; active in Rochester Council of Zionists, 228, 230, 231

Cassorla, Mayer, 187

Cauffman, Joseph, 126, 131, 272 *n.25*, 274 *n.43*

Cemetery, *see* Burial ground

Central Avenue, 71, 183, 210

Central Conference of American Rabbis, 102, 195

Chamber of Commerce (Rochester), 122, 158

Chaplaincy in Civil War, 254 *n.88*

Charitable organizations, 43

Chatham Street: early Jewish settlers lived on, 52; Beth Israel Congregation on, 54; Beth Hakneses Hachodesh on, 56, 74; East European group move into, 70; improvement of, 80; move of German Jews away from, 105; Ahavas Achim Anshe Radishkowitch Congregation on, 168; Hebrew Religious School on, 184; Progressive Library on, 152; B'nai Zion Hebrew Library on, 199

Chazan, *see* Hazzan

Chemists, Jews as, 129

Chertoff, Paul: rabbi at Beth Israel, 171-72, 173, 282 *n.21*; work with Zionist group, 229; work with young people, 231

Chesterfields, The, 197

Chevra Chayteem Congregation, 55, 168, 180; *see also* Beth Hamedrash Hagodol

Chevra Talmud Torah, 27

Chevra Tillem Society, 54

Choirs, in Synagogues, 31, 35, 38, 39

Chumacero, Judge 15

Circumciser (*mohel*), 23, 31, 36

City Hospital (Rochester), 117

Civil War, Rochester Jews' participation in, 10, 13-18

Clifford Avenue, 183, 210

Clinton Avenue, 160, 183

Clinton Place, 72

Clinton Street, 21; early meetings at home of Henry Levi on, 21; Odd Fellows Hall on, 98, 107; Phoenix Club on, 106

Clothers' Exchange, 124-28

Clothing industry: Jews identified with, 5, 6, 10, 121, 159-60; pattern in early, 7; labor problems in, 8, 115-17, 123-28; economic situation in, before and during Civil War, 8-11; increased importance of "factory-made" clothes, 13; attracted immigrants to Rochester, 64; as most important economic factor in Rochester, 120-28, 156-58

Clothing workers' union, 8

Clover Hills, 182

Cohen, Abraham, 30

Cohen, Charles, 175

Cohen, Gertrude, 291 *n.35*

Cohen, Hannah, 291 *n.35*

Cohen, Hyman J., 175

Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. James, 30

Cohen, Max, 236

Cohen, Samuel, 178

Cohn and Company, 122, 158

Colonial Hall, 228

Colonick, Simon, 53

Common Council (Rochester), 130

Community Chest (Rochester), 214

Confirmation, 29, 91

Congregational Church, 115-16

Conservative Judaism, 175-80, 200

Convention Hall, 211, 234

Conversions to Judaism, 32

Corinthian Hall, 249 *n.37*

Council of Jewish Women, 200, 201

Council of Zionists (Rochester), 228

Court Street, 108

Coxey Shul, 60

Credit union, 235

Culver Hall, 176

Cumberland Street, 21

Darrow and Brothers, 24

Daughters of Zion, 228, 229-30

Davidson, Abraham, 76, 81, 262 *n.31*

Death benefits, 92

DeHaas, Jacob, 228, 231

Delta Epsilon, 273 *n.31*

Democratic party, 207, 208, 209

Dime Society, 135
 Dragoons, 15
 Dreyfus, Alfred, 81
 Driving Park, 107
 Drob, Max, 175
 Dropsie, Moses A., 100
 Dubnikoff, Morris, 232

East Avenue, 105, 106
 East European Community, 51-82; transplantation to America, 55, 63-64, 147, 210-11; relations with German Jews, 63-69; social and fraternal life among, 70-82, 203; religious services of, 77-78; economic adjustment of, 123, 150-62; social structure of, 141-43; Americanization program for, 219; attitude toward Zionism, 226-27; 1900 *Census* report on, 277 n.8
 East High School, 203
 Education of Jewish children in Rochester: home instruction, 26; daily schools in synagogues, 26-28, 155, 168; in public schools, 28, 63, 110, 202, 240; of Orthodox Jews, 57, 184-86; of high school and college age, 74, 110, 172, 202; in German by Rabbi Moll, 110; in afternoons, 170; of girls, 170; non-member attendance at Sunday schools, 194; as instrument of unity, 201-202; Americanization program, 202-203; kindergarten, 220; of Poale Zion, 232-33; survey (1922), 285 n.64; *see also* Hebrew Schools; Sabbath Schools; Talmud Torah
 Edward Street, 55, 150
 Eighth Ward, 207
 Einhorn prayer book (*Olat Tamid*), 40, 89-90
 Ein Jacob Congregation, 167, 180
 Elias, Mayer, 187
 Elmira, N.Y., 15
 Elon Yerek Congregation, 86
 Elsner, L., 36
 Elsner, Minnie Wolff, 111
 Elsner, Mr. and Mrs. Simon, 129, 268 n.37
 Emma Lazarus Club, 172
 Englert, Charles, 81
 English Jews: among early settlers in Rochester, 5, 6, 12; Mr. Barnard, an English Jewish teacher, 26, 43; Isaac S. Samuels, an English Jew, 30
 Epstein, Henry, 41
 Erie Canal, 9
 Ettenheimer, David, 252 n.54

Ettenheimer, E. S.: income of, 14; head of Chevra Talmud Torah, 27; contribution to Palestine, 46-47; president of Hebrew Benevolent Society, 64; subsidized rent for Slonimski House, 73; conducted religious services at Odd Fellows Hall, 98; director of Merchants Bank, 271 n.8
 Ethical Club, 112-13
 Ethical Culture Society of New York City, 130
 Etz Chaim Congregation, 167
 Etz Chayim Congregation, 97
 Eureka Club, 107-109
 Evangelical Lutheran Church, 191, 192
 Excelsior Bowling League, 268 n.26
 Ezras Israel Aid Society, 280 n.1

"Family slips," *see* Pews
 Farband (Jewish National Workers' Alliance), 233
 Federation of American Zionists, 226, 229-31
 Feinman, Louis, 235
 Festival of Weeks (*Shavuot*), 29
 Fineman, Hayim, 234
 Finkelstein, Solomon, 61, 262 n.28
 Fisher, Lester, 75
 Fitzhugh Street, 192
 Flour City Lodge, Kesher Shel Barzel, 139
 Flower City Social Club, 79
 Fogel, Max, 206, 212
Folk Shule of the Poale Zion, 233-35
 Forman, Benjamin, 159-60
 Forman Company, 159
 Frankel, Charles, 175
 Frankel, Louis, 175, 282 n.36
 Frankel, Zechariah, 24
 Franklin Park, 105
 Franklin Square, 18, 198
 Fraternal orders, 44, 81, 82, 139-40
 Free Sons of Benjamin, Independent Order of, 81
 Free Sons of Israel, 81, 139, 140, 200
 Fremont, John C., 12
 French Jews, 81
 Friedlaender, Israel, 178, 238
 Front Street, 5, 21, 161
 Front Street Synagogue, 21
 Funerals, 79, 92

Gabai, Abraham, 187
 Galician Jews, 58, 142
 Gannett, Mary T., 112

Gannett, William C., 71, 74, 75, 103
Ganz, Isaac, 6
Ganz, Jacob, 249 n.5
Garson, Leopold, 124, 136, 137, 276 n.35
Garson, Mrs. J. L., 220, 269 n.38
Geiger, Abraham, 88
Gemilos Chesed Society, 44
German Reformers, 42
Genesee area, 6, 8, 9
Genesee Orphan's Home, 202
Genesee Park Hotel, 79
Genesee Valley Club, 204
Gentlemen's Driving Club, 107
Germania Hall: Purim balls and benefit programs at, 79, 210, 228; Yiddish stock companies at, 206
German Jews in America: 1843-1870, 3-47; 1870-1900, 85-143; relations with East European Jews, 51, 63-69, 204; social integration, 105-13; home life of, 109; active in German-American Community, 110; in clothing industry, 120; in the professions, 128-29; in politics, 130-32; social structure of, 141-43; attitude toward Zionism, 226-27; population in U.S. Census, 277 n.8, 10
"Ghetto" conditions in Rochester, 150
Gibbs Street, 103, 192
Gilmore Street, 150
Ginsberg, David: as rabbi of Beth Israel, 61, 164, 165; went to Wilkes-Barre, 171; presided over rabbinical court, 182; delegate to Zionist meeting, 228
Goldberg, Abraham, 231
Goldberg, Mrs. Julius A., 269 n.38
Goldenson, Samuel, 71, 75, 189
Goldman, Abraham, 231
Goldman, Albert, 215
Goldman, Emma, 123
Goldman, Hyman, 168; member of committee for Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, 212; aided Hebrew Free Loan Association, 215; member of Board of Jewish Sheltering Home, 216
Goldman, Mrs. Toby, 291 n.28, n.35
Goldstein, Mrs. Abe, 291 n.35
Goldstein, Benjamin, 75, 288 n.4
Goldstein, Hannah, 291 n.35
Goldstein, Jacob H., 282 n.36
Goldstein, Joseph, 231
Goldstein, Reuben, 175
Goldstein's Hall, 59
Goler, George, 278 n.7
Goodman Street, 105
Gordon, Jacob, 212
Gordon, Joseph, 235
Gorham Street, 216
Gottlieb, Louis R., 207
Grand Island, 3
Greece, N.Y., 5, 168
Greenberg, Nathan, 59
Greenhouse, Isadore, 233, 295 n.36
Greenstone, Meyer, 52
Greentree, Meyer (or Myer): father of Rochester Jewish Community, 5; income of, 14; aided Elon Yerek Congregation, 86
Greentree and Wile, 10
"Greentree Shul," 96
Griesheimer, Marie, 269 n.41, 273 n.27
Grove Place, 103
Guggenheim, William: elected alderman from Sixth Ward, 13, 130, 131; member of Harmony, 19
Guinzberg, Aaron, 37-40
Gutman, Max L., 95, 252 n.61
Guttman, A., 103
Hacham (Sephardic rabbi), 187
Hachnosas Orchim (boarding house), 184, 211, 284 n.61
Hadassah, 230, 231
Handley, Elijah A., 192
Hanover Street: one of main centers of early Jewish population, 150, 187; B'nai David Congregation located here, 168
Hanover Street Hebrew School, 76
Harmony Club, 19, 106
Harrison, Benjamin, 67
Hart, Alfred: initiated self-service grocery stores in Rochester, 161; staunch supporter of Conservative Judaism, 179-80; quoted, 197, 216, 217-18; officer of Jewish Young Men's Association, 198; supported Zionist movement, 231
Hart, Leo, 161
Hart, Moses, 161
Hasidic group, 61
Hatikvah (Jewish national anthem), 230
Hayehudi (European Hebrew journal), 164
Hays, David, 65, 131, 274 n.43
Hays, Mrs. Henry, 269 n.38
Hays, Moses: president of Berith Kodesh Congregation, 37, 91; supporter of Reform movement, 38, 40, 274 n.2
Hays, Simon, 47, 130-31
Hays and Brothers, 10

Hayyim Selig Slonimski society, 73
Hazzan, 22, 23, 36
 Head covering in synagogue, 90
 Hebrew: teaching of language, 27; statistics on, as mother tongue in U.S. *Census*, 148, 149; use of term, 266 n.75
 Hebrew, German and English Institute, 28
 Hebrew Benevolent Society: establishment of, 8, 43, 76; work during Civil War, 14; annual balls of, 15, 18, 43-44; HIAS outgrowth of, 64; cooperated in United Jewish Charities, 135
 Hebrew Charity Association, 76
 Hebrew Dietary Association (Rochester), 166, 182
 Hebrew Dramatic and Benefit Society, 73
 Hebrew Free School, 74
 Hebrew Free Library, 200
 Hebrew Free Loan Association (Rochester), 215
 Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), 64
 Hebrew Ladies Aid Society, 76-77
 Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, 45, 135-36
 Hebrew Ladies' Ose Chesed Society (Rochester), 215
 Hebrew Ladies Relief Society, 77, 210, 211
 Hebrew Library (B'nai Zion), 199, 200
 Hebrew Religious School (Rochester), 74, 184
 Hebrew Retail Butchers' Association (Rochester), 182
 Hebrew schools: at Berith Kodesh, 27-28; at Beth Israel, 57; at Beth El, 178, 185; others, 74, 201, 232; critics of, 285 n.65; *see also* Talmud Torah; Hebrew Religious School
 Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati), 95, 171; Zionism and, 227-28, 293 n.6
 Henshel, Mr. S., 73
 Herman Street, 55, 73
 Hertz, Joseph, 74
 Herzman, Elkan J., 31
 Hevra Kadisha (Burial Society), 53, 79
 HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), 64
 Hickey, Jeremiah J., 110
 Hill, David J., 103
 Hirsch, Emil G., 103
 Hochstein, Jacob, 73
 Hochstein, Minnie, 273 n.27
 Hollander, Jacob, 216, 295 n.38
 Holtz, Simon, 86
 Holtzman, Mrs. Harry, 178
 Horwitz, Abraham F., 159
 Horwitz, Jesse, 159
 Hudson Avenue, 55, 150, 183
 Hughes, James, 126
 Humane Society, 117
 Immigration Act of 1924, 147
 Immigration of Jews to America; from West Europe, 5-7; from East Europe, 51, 53-55, 63-64, 210-11; views on, 58, 65, 142; effect on religious life in Rochester, 163; influence of mass, 225
 Independent Hebrew Friends Association, 76
 Independent Literary Union, 18, 249 n.37
 Industry, Jews in Rochester engaged in, 156-57; *see also* Clothing industry
 Infants' Summer Hospital, 139
 Interfaith activities, 114-16, 191-93
 Intermarriage, 93, 191, 203
 Irondequoit Country Club, 203-205
 Isaacs, S. M., 31, 46
 Jackson, Philip, 269 n.9
 Jacobs, H. R., 109
 Jacobstein, Meyer: as Congressman, 71, 208-209; active in Boys' Evening Club, 75; presided at national convention of Federation of American Zionists, 230
 Jacobstein, Mrs. Meyer, 287 n.4
 Jewish Alliance of Rochester, 290 n.1
Jewish Encyclopedia, 171
 Jewish Home for Aged, 201, 218-19
 Jewish Ladies' Aid Hospital Society, 17, 136
 Jewish Military Welfare Society (Rochester), 200-201
 Jewish Orphan Asylum, 95, 133-35, 223-24, 275 n.7
 Jewish relief work, 135
 Jewish Sheltering Home, 216-17
 Jewish social club, 18
 Jewish Society for Russian refugees, 64
 Jewish Theological Seminary (Breslau), 24, 88-89
 Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 169
Jewish Tidings, 99-103
 Jewish Welfare Board, 195, 212
 Jewish Welfare Council, 195, 214-15
 Jewish Widows and Orphans Fund, 249 n.37

Jewish Young Men's Association, 75, 102, 198, 287 *n.4*

Jewish Young Women's Association, 198, 287 *n.4*

Jews in Rochester: first settlers, 3-47; social life among, 12-19, 42-47, 105-13, 139-40, 141-43, 197-209; religious life of, 20-47, 85-104, 163-96; educational program of, 26-28; *see also* Education; University of Rochester; philanthropic and welfare work of, 42-47, 133-39, 210-25; from East Europe, 51-82; and their Christian neighbors, 114-19, 191-93; economic activities of, 120-32, 150-62; in the professions, 128-29; in politics, 130-32, 207-209; social structure of, 141-43; population changes among, 147-49; Zionism and, 226-37

Joffe, Abraham D.: Orthodox leader, 175; supported Hebrew Religious School, 184; Hebrew Free Loan Association, 215; Jewish Sheltering Home, 216; Zionist movement, 231

Joffe, Mrs. Harris, 178, 287 *n.4*

Joffe, Isaac: supported Conservative Judaism, 175; active at Temple Beth El, 177, 179, 282 *n.36*; supported Free Loan Society, 215

Joiner Street: early Jewish settlers on, 52; East European immigrants moved into, 70; Y.M.J.A. on, 71; exodus of German Jews from, 105

Jones, R. D., 251 *n.29*

Joseph, Jacob, 68

Joseph Avenue, 152, 187

Journalism, Jews in, 159

Journeymen tailors, 8-9

Judaism in Rochester: reform movement in, 26-42; 85-104, 189-96; conversions to, 32; Orthodox and Reform controversy in, 32, 52, 68, 238-41; *see also* Berith Kodesh Congregation; Beth El Congregation; Orthodox groups by name

Judean Club, 74, 75, 198, 262 *n.13*

Junior Hadassah, 231

J.Y.M. & W.A., *see* Jewish Young Men and Women's Association

Kahn, Marcus, 199

Kalisch, Dr., 15, 37, 40

Kaminsky, David, 53

Kaplan, Mordecai M., 229

Kaplan's Hall, 154, 234

Kaplansky, Shlomo, 234

Kappa Nu, 207

Kasdin, Charles, 232

Kashruth (dietary laws), 164, 165, 183; *see also* Ritual slaughterers

Kashruth Board (Vaad Hakashruth), 166

Katz, Abram J., 158, 221

Katz, Joseph, 103, 249 *n.5*, 276 *n.35*

Katz, Samuel, 177

Kaufman, Lesser, 75

Kaufman, Nathan (Nissan), 74

Kelly Street, 55; Rabbi Rosen's home on, 59; Hebrew School on, 74; tailors on, 187, 188

Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund), 231

Kesher-Shel Barzel Lodge, 81, 139, 140

Kessler, David, 206

Kirstein, Henry E., 158

Kirznaum, Rachel, *see* Aiole, Mrs. Sol

Klonick, Harry, 288 *n.4*

Knesses Israel Congregation, 180

Knights' Cutters, Trimmers, and Tailors of America, 125

Knights of Labor: opposition to immigration, 65; struggle between Clothiers' Exchange and, 124-28

Know-Nothing party, 16

Kohler, Kaufmann, 282 *n.19*

Kohn, Eugene, 229

Kohn, Solomon S., 57, 259 *n.32*

Kolko, Mr. and Mrs. Hyman, 231, 285 *n.63*

Kosher: meat, 28; slaughtering, 59, 182-83; *see also* Butchers; Ritual slaughterers

Krass, Nathan, 189-90

Kurlansky, Samuel, 155

Labor Lyceum, 115

Ladies' Hospital Association, 17

Ladies' Zion Endeavor, 228

Lancaster Street, 30

Landsberg, Max, 20, 54; quoted, 65, 100, 136; United Jewish Charities organized by, 77; as rabbi at Berith Kodesh, 88-104; sermons of, 93; prayer book of, 94-95, 252 *n.61*; Bible Class of, 110; interest in politics, 131; as president of Jewish Orphan Asylum, 134, 274 *n.2*; president of Rochester Red Cross Society, 138; as leader in Rochester, 142; retirement of, 189, 190

Landsberg, Mrs. Max, 111, 113

Lapides, Sarah, 285 *n.63*

Lauterbach, Jacob Z., 171, 228
 LaVine, Mrs. Saul, 287 n.4
 Lawyers, Jews as, 129, 158
 Lazarus, Joseph A., 207
 Lazarus, Louis, 208
 Lazerson, Morris, 207
 Lee, Henry W., 24
 Lempert, Michael H., 86
 Lempert, Morris, 131
 Leopold Street: Beth Israel synagogue on, 56, 173; Hebrew School on, 57; Berith Oulom met on, 97
 Leve, Harold R., 207
 Levenson, Rabbi, 56
 Levi, Harris, 167
 Levi, Henry, 21, 249 n.5
 Levi, Samuel, 187
 Levin, Jacob J., 155
 Levin, Louis, 235
 Levin, Shmarya, 228, 230
 Levin, Solomon, 167
 Levinson, Morris, 161
 Levy, Abram J., 207
 Levy, Barnet, 53
 Levy, Felix A., 189
 Levy, Joseph, 15
 Levy, Horwitz, and Lauterbrook, 159
 Light of Israel of Monastir Congregation, 187; *see also* Sephardic Jews
 Lincoln, Abraham, 130
 Lipski, Isaac, 53
 Lipsky, Mrs. Abraham, 287 n.4
 Lipsky, Gamlieil, 295 n.36
 Lipsky, Jacob, 56
 Lipsky, Julius, 233
 Lipsky, Louis: Boys' Evening Home and, 71, 75; at national convention of Federation of American Zionists, 229, 230; quoted, 237; cited, 261 n.21, 274 n.45
Living My Life (Goldman), 123
 Locke Manufacturing Company, 158
 Lockouts, 126
 Lodges, 82
 Lorber, Bernard, 61
 Lowenthal, Louis, 19
 Lowenthal, Max, 110; control of Lamb machine, 122; active in Chamber of Commerce, 158, 272 n.25
 Luria, Isaac, 259 n.38
 Lyceum Theater, 109, 206
 Lyons, N.Y., 15
 McDonald Avenue, 55
 Magnes, Judah, 230
 Main Street: stores on, 6, 106, 159; Harmony Club met on, 19, 106; Hebrew, German and English Institute on, 28; Beth Israel met on, 53; fire on, 192
 Main Street Bridge, 121
 Mandel, Joseph, 86
 Mann, Newton M., 86, 94, 114
 Mannheimer, Sigmund, 94
 Margolis, Gabriel Zev, 166
 Marks, Haskell: at Boys' Evening Club, 75; officer of Jewish Young Men's Association, 198, 288 n.4; alderman from Seventh Ward, 208; active in Zionist movement, 228
 Marks, Samuel, 249 n.5
 Marriages, 79; *see also* Intermarriage; Weddings
 Marshall, Louis, 100, 213
 Maslansky, Zvi Hirsch, 230
 Masons, 12
 Mayer, Isaac, 26, 28, 29, 30
 Meigs Street, 176
 Men's Clubs: of Temple Beth El, 178; of Temple B'rith Kodesh, 206
 Merriman Street, 106
 Messinger, Charles, 155
 Methodist Church, 192
 Metzger, Louis, 208
 Meyer, Garson, 207
 Meyer, Jacob, 30
 Meyer, Sarah G., 291 n.35
 Michaels, Harry, 221
 Michaels, Henry: income of, 14; helped organize Harmony Club, 19; represented Berith Kodesh at dedication of Beth Israel synagogue, 56; on Chamber of Commerce, 122, 272 n.25; president of Clothiers' Exchange, 126; president of Empire State Insurance Company, 271 n.8
 Michaels, Joseph, 158, 212, 213
 Michaels, Josephine (Mrs. James Cohen), 30
 Michaels, Levi and Company, 10
 Mikvah (ritual bath), 28, 167
 Mill Street, 10
Minhag Amerika (Wise), 37, 89
 Minkin, Jacob S., 178
 Minsky, Abraham, 52
 Minsky, Joseph, 52
Minyan (small informal congregation), 52, 78, 189
 Mitenthal, Ellis, 228
 Mizrahi Zionist movement, 231, 235-36

Mohel, *see* Circumciser
Moll, Max S.: rabbi of Aitz Raanon Congregation, 96, 97; as teacher, 110, 134; at Berith Kodesh, 189, 265 n.54; rabbi of Etz Chayim Congregation, 265 n.49
Morganstein, H., 216
Mortara, Edgar, 46
Moscowitz, Charles, 175
Mosely, David E., 56, 86, 97
"Mosely Shul," 98
Moses, I., 102
Mother's Club for Israel, 291 n.25
Mount Hope Cemetery, 21, 182, 249 n.3

Nassau Street: early Jewish settlers on, 52, 188; Hasidic group met on, 61; Alfred Dreyfus Lodge met on, 81; movement of German Jews away from, 105
Natapow, Mrs. Nathan, 285 n.63
National Clothing Company, 159
National Industrial Recovery Act, 209, 289, n.31
Neckwear, 122, 158
Neisner, Abraham, 160
Neisner, Joseph, 160
Neuhaffer, Nathan, 12, 13, 24, 247 n.10
Neuman, Emanuel, 232
Newspaper business, 70-71
Nichols Park (later known as Oxford Street), 105
Noah, Mordecai Manuel, 3-4
North Street, 105
Nurserymen, 9
Nusbaum, Aaron, 52, 55
Nusbaum, Harris, 166, 167
Nusbaum, Lester, 211, 219, 231
Nusbaum, Myer, 52, 55
Nusbaum, Simon, 55

Odd Fellows Lodge, 12, 98, 107, 250 n.7
Olan, Levi, 222
Olat Tamid (Einhorn prayer book), 40, 89-90
Olsan, Mary, 178
Oregon Street, 70, 105
Orthodox community in Rochester: dissension within, 52-62; Reform group and, 52, 68, 238-41; religious life of, 163-88; *see also* under specific name of congregation
Orthodox Jewish relief society, 76
Orthodox Sunday School, 170
Osburn House, 71
Ouzire Dollim Congregation, 55

Oxford Street, 105, 176

Palestine: poor of, 23, 46; desire of some Rochester Jews to go to, 79-80, 236; *see also* Zionism
Palestine Foundation Fund (Keren Hayesod), 231
Paley, Lesser, 231, 291 n.28
Palmers' Hall, 13
Palmyra, N.Y., 43
Park, Aaron L., 30
Park Avenue, 176
Parliament of Religions, 111
Parsons, Mayor Cornelius R., 91
Pastime Club, 197
Peddling: trade of early Jewish settlers, 5-7, 105; East Europeans in, 52, 75; on Sunday, 67; decline in, 156
Perlmutter, Nathan, 232
Pesso, Jacob, 187
Pews, 41, 92, 174
Philanthropy, Jewish, 133-39; *see also* Welfare
Philipson, David, 100, 102
Phoenix Club, 106-107
Physicians, Jews as, 129, 158
"Pittsburgh Platform," 98
Poale Tzedek Congregation, 180
Poale Zion, 231, 232-35
Pogroms, 63, 65
Polish Jews, 5, 247 n.7, 257 n.1; *see also* East European Community
Polish Socialist Association, 278 n.9
Politics, German Jews in, 130-32
Pool, David de Sola, 229
Population changes of Jews in America, 147-49
Posner, Mrs. Maxwell, 287 n.4
Prayer book, 89-90, 94-95
Presbyterian Church, 192
Present, Philip, 198, 288 n.4
Progress Club, 106
"Progressive Library," 152
Pryor Street, 55
Purim, 29, 78-79
Purim Bal Masque, 108

Raisin, Max, 229
Raphall, Morris, 21
"Rav," 169, 171
Red Cross Society, 138
Reform Genesee Home, 217
Reform movement in Rochester, *see* Beith (or B'rith) Kodesh Congregation

Regner, Sidney, 222
 Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, 212
 Religious education, *see* Hebrew schools;
 Sabbath School program; Sunday
 schools
 Republican Party, 12, 130, 207, 273 *n.36*
 Retail Research Association, 160
 Reynolds Library, 117
 Rhees, Rush, 169, 192
 Rhine Street, 55, 150
 Rice, Israel, 41
 Ritual bath (*Mikvah*), 28, 167
 Ritual slaughterers: those who served as,
 21, 22, 28, 31, 36, 56; and butchers, 61,
 67, 165; board of control of, 166-67
 Robfogel, Joseph, 231
 Robinsky, Samuel, 208
 Rochester: first Jews in, 3-11; economic
 situation saved by clothing industry, 9-
 11; effect of Civil War on, 10; early
 social life of Jews, 12-19; education in
 early, 27-28; welfare work of Jews in,
 42-47, 133-40, 210-25; East Europeans
 in, 51-82; Jewish periodical published
 in, 99-103; social integration of German
 Jews in, 105-13; theater in, 109-10, 206;
 Jews and Christians as neighbors, 114-
 19; economic activities of Jews in, 120-
 32, 152-62; higher education in, 128;
 see also Rochester, University of; social
 structure of Jewish community, 141-43;
 population changes, 147-49; social and
 cultural life (1900-1925), 197-209
 Rochester, University of: Jewish students
 at, 23, 99, 128-29; admission of women
 to, 112; good relations between Jewish
 and Gentile students at, 117; Jewish
 fraternities at, 207
 Rochester Knitting Works, 158
 Rose, Bernard: one of founders of Beth
 El Congregation, 175; officer of Jewish
 Young Men's Association, 198; active in
 Free Loan Association, 215; active in
 Zionist movement, 231
 Rose, Mrs. Bernard, 186, 230, 231, 272
 n.26
 Rosen, Abraham, 58-59, 61, 164
 Rosenberg, Annie, 273 *n.27*
 Rosenberg, David, 90
 Rosenberg, George, 86
 Rosenberg, Henry, 41
 Rosenberg, Morris, 208
 Rosenberg, Moses, 129, 208
 Rosenberg, Norman, 288 *n.4*
 Rosenberg, Sampson, 249 *n.4*
 Rosenberg, Sigmund, 5
 Rosenblatt, Levy, 36
 Rosenblatt, Samuel, 274 *n.2*
 Rosenblatt, Simon, 105
 Rosenbloom, Jacob, 53, 60
 Rosenbloom, Selig, 274 *n.5*
 Rosenfield, Nimrod: interest in music at
 Berith Kodesh, 35, 39; influential in
 reform movement, 38, 41
 Rosenthal, Arndt, 15
 Rosenthal, Benjamin, 175
 Rosenthal, Joseph W., 72, 131
 Rosenthal, May Ethel, 273 *n.27*
 Rosenthal and Stettheimer, 10
 Rothschild, Bernard, 126, 272 *n.25*
 Rothschild, Meyer (or Meyer): early set-
 tler in Rochester, 6, 21; active in Berith
 Kodesh Congregation, 24, 103, 249 *n.3*
 Roussou, Moshe, 187
 Rubens, Moses W., 75
 Rubenstein, Jacob, 233
 Rumanian Jews, 5, 142
 Rumanian Aid Society, 184
 Rumball, Edwin A., 221
 Rundbacken, Victor, 87, 96
Rural New Yorker (Moore), 106
 Russian Jews, 5; *see also* East European
 Community
 Russian Revolution of 1905, 153
 Sabbath, efforts to change, from Saturday
 to Sunday, 67, 100-102
 Sabbath School program, 28, 90, 92
 Sadowsky, Solomon, 166, 182, 236
 Saengerbund (German Singing Society),
 278 *n.9*
 Saint Joseph Street: Congregation Cabra
 Kadische of the Jewish Church met on,
 53; B'nai Aviezer group met on, 55;
 center of new Jewish immigration, 67;
 Judean Club on, 75; Alfred Dreyfus
 Lodge met on, 81; Elon Yerek Congre-
 gation met on, 86; vacation fund for
 children attending school on, 113
 Saint Luke's Church, 24
 Saint Paul Street: Osburn House on, 71;
 Berith Kodesh synagogue on, corner of
 Andrews and, 102-103; center of cloth-
 ing trade, 121; Jewish Orphan Asylum
 on, 134; Jewish migration to, 180; Jew-
 ish Home for the Aged on, 218
 Saint Paul Street Sunday School, 201
 Samuel, Isaac S., 30, 253 *n.67*

Samuelsohn, Mr. and Mrs. Henry, 75, 201
Sarachan, Louis, 175, 208
Sarnier, Ferdinand, 30-34; Jewish regimental chaplain in Civil War, 33; 253 n.71
Schiffrin, Solomon, 73, 186
Schiffrin, Stella, 214
Schmidt, Abraham: as Cantor and reader at Berith Kodesh, 36, 38, 40, 41, 88; in New York city, 255 n.99
Schoenberg, Israel, 208
Schuetzen Park, 206
Schwarz Brothers, 10
Schwarze Selig (black Selig), 78
Sea Breeze, 206
Seamstresses, 8
Sefer Torah (scroll of the Law), 184
"Self-Serving Cash Grocery," 161
Seligman, Henrietta, 112
Seligman, Henry M., 36, 246 n.14, 267 n.4
Seligman, Jesse, 273 n.36
Seligman, Julia, 112, 273 n.27
Seligman, Miriam, 112, 245 n.11, 269 n.41, 273 n.27
Seligman, Morris, 6, 12, 14
Seligman, Theodore, 273 n.36
Sephardic Alliance, 188
Sephardic Jews, 149, 186-88, 277 n.12, 286 n.69
Seventh Ward, 150, 207, 208
Shantz, Moses B., 122
Shapero, Mrs. I. M., 287 n.4
Shatz, Joseph, 41
Shatz, Josephine, 111
Shatz, Mrs. R., 268 n.37
Sherman, Frank, 291 n.28
Sheves Achim Congregation, 52, 53
Shloime der Ligner (Solomon the Liar), 78
Shofar (periodical), 237
Shohet, see Ritual slaughterer
Shitibel (private home synagogue), 181
Shubert Theater, 206
Shulman, Louis, 282 n.36
Sichel, A., 41, 108
Silverman, Joseph, 100
Silverstein, Joseph, 215, 231
Sisterhood of Personal Service, 111
Sisterhoods: of Temple Berith Kodesh, 111, 206, 208 n.37; of Temple Beth El, 178-79
Sixth Ward, 130
Slonimski House, 73
Smit, Jacob M., 30
Smit, Moses H., 30
Soble, Nathan, 129
Social Center movement (Rochester), 202, 221
Socialist Labor Party, 151-52
Socialist Party, 152, 208, 234
Social Settlement of Rochester, 202, 220-23
Solomon, Abraham, 285 n.64
Solomon, Mrs. Hannah, 111
South Street, 105
Spanish-Portuguese Jews, 257 n.r
Spinoza Literary Society, 73
Standard Club, 106
Stanwix Hall, 21
State Street, 52
Steefel, Joseph, 21, 22, 23
Stein, Louis, 192
Stein, Nathan, 126
Stein, Simon, 158, 290 n.9
Steinberg, Milton, 172, 231
Stein-Bloch Company, 121, 125
Stern, Abram, 12, 13, 131
Stern, Henry W., 200
Stern, Simon, 100, 117
Stern, Michaels, and Company, 121
Stettheimer, Sigmund, 14, 17, 38
Stewart, Sara Vance, 220
Stone Street, 28
Straus, Nathan, 295 n.39
Strikes: economic unrest of 1850s caused, 8; Knights of Labor and, 125; of 1913, 150; tailors' union, 151-52; of United Garment Worker's Union, 153
Strouss, Elias, 131
Sturman, Samuel, 175, 214
Sukkot festival (Tabernacles), 80
Sunday schools, 194, 201-202
"Sweatshops," 151
Synagogue, 20-47, 141-43; *see also under* name of specific congregation
Syracuse, N.Y., 16
Syrkin, Nachum, 234
Szold, Henrietta, 229
Tailoring, 156
Tailor's association, 8
Tailor's union, 151-52
Talmud Torah (Orthodox Hebrew school), 167, 168, 185-86
Testa, Rafael, 187
Theater in Rochester, 109
Theodore Herzl Zion Club, 228
Thomas Street, 188, 285 n.64

Tiphereth Israel Congregation, 180
 Tomashevsky, Boris, 206
 Traditionalism, in Judaism, 86, 98, 163
 Treumann, S., 250 n.9
 Turkish Jews, *see* Sephardic Jews
 Turn Verein, 110
 Tuska, Mordecai, 21-23, 26, 43
 Tuska, Rebecca (Mrs. Mordecai Tuska), 22
 Tuska, Simon: son of Mordecai and Rebecca Tuska, 22; won scholarship at Univ. of Rochester, 23-24, 128; went to Memphis as rabbi, 34, 37; memorial service for, 251 n.29

Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 92, 193, 263 n.24
 Union Street, 70, 105
 Unions, labor: early movements in clothing industry, 8, 125-28; tailors', 151-52; of United Garment Workers, 153
 Unitarian Church, 86, 94, 114-16
 United Garment Workers of America, 126-27, 153-55
 United Jewish Charities: work with immigrants, 66, 77, 186, 213; purpose and scope of work, 136-38; merged with Associated Hebrew Charities to form Jewish Welfare Council, 214, 224-25
 United Jewish Welfare Fund, 3
 United Synagogue of America, 178
 Universalist Church, 114-16, 191-92
 Unterberg, Morris, 53
 Upper Ten Social Club, 197
 Upright Social Club, 197

Vaad Hakashruth: community board in control of ritual slaughtering, 166-67; difficulties with butchers, 182; rules and regulations of, 280 n.7
 Vaad (or Waad) Hakolel Congregation, 59-60, 164, 166-67
 Vacation fund, 113
 Vienna Street, 76, 188
 Vosburgh, John, 28
 Vose Street, 150

Ward, Edward J., 202
 Warner, J. Foster, 176
 Washington Hall, 106
 Water Street, 81
 Weddings, 79, 92, 108
 Weil, Joseph, 21, 249 n.3
 Weil, Mrs. Samuel, 269 n.38

Weil, William, 235
 Weilerstein, Sadie Rose, 186-87
 Weinberg, Abram, 249 n.5
 Weinstein, Morris, 232
 Weiss, Esther, 75, 287 n.4
 Weizmann, Chaim, 232
 Welfare work among Jews in Rochester, 42-47; *see also* Philanthropy, Jewish
 White Caps, 5, 67, 274 n.48
 Widows and orphans fund, 45
 Wile, Gabriel: early Jewish settlers in Rochester, 5; income of, 14; officer in *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, 47; at semicentennial jubilee celebration of Berith Kodesh, 103-104; served as deputy collector of customs, 131, 273 n.43; one of founders of Berith Kodesh, 249 n.5
 Wile, Henry, 129
 Wile, Isaac: and Sol Wile founded Sabbath School at Berith Kodesh, 28; worked for systematic reform, 85; on Chamber of Commerce, 122, 272 n.25; admitted to bar, 129
 Wile, Joseph: early Jewish settlers in Rochester, 5; an organizer of Harmony Club, 19; worked for moderate reform, 38, 41, 88; officer in *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, 47; a founder of Berith Kodesh, 249 n.5
 Wile, Julius: income of, 14; and Harmony Club, 19; member of Berith Kodesh Congregation, 41; joined Elon Yerek Congregation, 86; contributor to free burial ground, 276 n.35
 Wile, Mrs. Julius, 117
 Wile, Sol: and Isaac Wile founded Sabbath School at Berith Kodesh, 28; worked for systematic reform, 85; quoted, 95; planned Clothiers' Exchange, 126; admitted to bar, 129
 Wile, Brickner, and Company, 121
 Wiley, Louis, 99, 159
 Williams, Brigadier General, 15
 Williams, Mrs. W. Barron, 17
 Wise, Isaac Mayer (rabbi in Albany), leader in reform movement, 22, 31; lectured in Rochester, 35, 40; revised ritual of, 37
 Wise, Stephen S., 177, 213
 Witkofsky, Louis, 71, 75
 Wolf, Horace J.: assistant rabbi at Berith Kodesh, 168; became senior rabbi, 192, 193-96; work for National Jewish Wel-

fare Board, 200; Confirmation Class, 202; suggested Men's Club at B'rith Kodesh, 206; at national convention of Federation of American Zionists, 229

Wolfe, Anna, 214

Wolff, Abram B., 109, 208

Wolff (or Wolf), Elias: early settler in Rochester, 6, 14, 40; active in Berith Kodesh Congregation, 24, 38, 249 *n.5*

Wolff, William D., 129

Women: activities in welfare work, 45, 76-77, 111-12, 133, 135-36, 220; in congregational life, 110-12, 170; Sisterhood movement, 111, 206; National Council of Jewish Women, 111-12; in social clubs, 112-13; in higher education, 112, 128; in labor group, 123-25; Young Women's Association, 198; loan association organized by, 215-16; Daughters' Club, 219; in Zionist movement, 229-30

Women's Educational and Industrial Union, 113

Workmen's Circle, 152-55, 233

Workmen's Compensation Act, 151

World War I, 200, 212

Yiddish: use of at synagogue, 53, 56; U.S. Census on those speaking, 148, 149; and Workmen's Circle, 152, 155; books in, at Hebrew Library, 199

Yiddish stock companies, 206

Y.M.C.A. Building, 117

Y.M.J.A., *see* Young Men's Jewish Association

Yofse, Isaac, 258 *n.27*

Young Judea clubs, 172

Young Judea Council, 231

Young Ladies Hebrew Social Club, 197

Young Men's Hebrew Association, 102

Young Men's Jewish Association, 71-73, 102, 197-202

Young Men's Sephardic Association, 188

Young Men's Zionist Society, 228, 231

Young People's Benefit Circle, 198

Zelter, Joseph, 233

Zerubabel Lodge, 45, 71, 139

Zion Endeavor Society, 228

Zionist movement, 199, 200, 204; rise and growth of, 226-37

Zuckerman, Baruch, 233, 234, 294 *n.33*





